



**membership** manual



 **ROSWELL**  
communitychurch

WE EXIST TO GLORIFY GOD BY PURSUING GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.





# introduction

In the New Testament, we read that after Jesus of Nazareth's ascension God's mission moved rapidly and powerfully across the known world, manifested in small communities of people changed by Christ—churches. These people came from all races, genders and languages and shared a common faith in a man, Jesus Christ, as the One True God who had redeemed them through His own death and resurrection. These churches were the centers of God's redemptive march; they were the image of Trinitarian community and reflections of the self-sacrificing Gospel that had birthed them. Nearly the entire New Testament is written to local churches to help them live out God's purposes in their cities and cultures. The Church, to this day, remains the clearest physical expression of God on the earth, imperfect as it may be. It is called the Body and Bride of Christ. Today in North Atlanta, one manifestation of Christ's global Church is Roswell Community. We are a gospel-centered community seeking to live out the mission Christ has given to His Bride: to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

*This book is about us:* our particular mission, our core beliefs and what it means for you to be a part of this local body.



**TO GLORIFY  
GOD BY PURSUING  
GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**

What is the process of Gospel Transformation as reflected through God's church?  
 Every believer actively engaging in a **three-fold process** through the power of the Holy Spirit:



<b>WORSHIP TOGETHER:</b>	<b>ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY:</b>	<b>LIVE ON MISSION:</b>
Engage in life-renewing relationship with God	Engage in life-changing relationships in community	Engage in life-giving relationship with the world

This engagement is under-girded by a devotion to God's Word and to prayer.

The logo features a stylized circular emblem composed of overlapping curved lines in shades of blue, green, and orange. To the right of this emblem, the words "doctrinal statement" are written in a clean, sans-serif font, with "doctrinal" in a bold weight and "statement" in a regular weight.

# doctrinal statement

In the Old Testament, the prophet Amos posed a simple and powerful question: “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to meet?” A local expression of God’s universal Church, like Roswell Community Church (RCC), must agree to meet in order to walk together. What is that agreement for a church? It is when believers unite around a core set of shared beliefs. At RCC, these beliefs, these gospel truths, originate from Scripture and are voiced throughout our church: in the ancient creeds; in a shared Catechism; in the weekly liturgical readings; in the teaching from the pulpit; in our participation in the Church Calendar; and particularly in our Confession of Faith. These truths are not emphasized in order to exclude; instead, they are intended to be that place where all of us at RCC can meet in order to walk together.

## **WE BELIEVE**

We believe that our only hope in life and death is that we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, our desired goal is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The following “We believes” are the foundation of that “only hope” and “desired goal.”

### **I. THE TRIUNE GOD**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally, but unique, divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

## **II. REVELATION**

We believe that God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

## **III. THE CREATION OF HUMANITY**

We believe that, as the capstone to his creation, God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains



that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role of preaching and eldership within the church given to qualified men, is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

#### IV. **THE FALL**

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan’s temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God’s own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

#### V. **THE PLAN OF GOD**

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

## VI. **THE GOSPEL**

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is: “Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

## VII. **THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST**

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else,

for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

### **VIII. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS**

We believe that Christ, by his voluntary obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. The believer is accepted by the Father in Christ as Christ Himself is accepted, being made one with Him forever. The believer is, at the point of salvation, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ. We are perfect in our standing before God even though in this life we will never attain perfection in our behavior. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

### **IX. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the other Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin,

righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, and in him they are baptized into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, adopted into God's family and placed into the universal body of Christ. They participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts to be invested in this world for God's glory and the good of others. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, eternally securing the salvation of the believer. In this age the Holy Spirit indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers to be progressively transformed into Christ-like living and service.

## X. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

We believe that the kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. Thus, those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. The kingdom therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace in the new community. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God.



## **XI. GOD'S NEW PEOPLE CHURCH**

We believe that the church is a component (part, element, piece, etc) of God's kingdom, made up of his new covenant people who have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The establishment of local churches is commanded in the New Testament scriptures and a plurality of godly men, called elders, serve the local assembly under the authority of Christ as servants to Christ and are given authority by Him to lead and shepherd the local church. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

## **XII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

### **XIII. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS**

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom and eternal plan will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

When all of this is accomplished, we will fully experience our “only hope,” that we are not our own but belong entirely to him, and will attain our “desired goal,” to glorify and enjoy him forever! Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!



## significance of **membership**

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...*

Romans 12.4-6

When Paul sought language to describe the Church, he looked down at his own body (1 Corinthians 12.12-26). The body, with its many and varied parts, was created to work in harmony. No one part is independent and each part relies on the others to function healthily and as intended. This is how the Church lives and grows. The Church is not a building or a series of programs or a Sunday service. The Church is made of people who are disciples of Jesus Christ, who recognize that they must depend on the Holy Spirit and each other to follow Jesus in this world.

Membership is a declaration of this reality. Membership at Roswell Community Church is not a club where some are in and some are out. It's not something you join. It does not determine who the pastors will love or visit in the hospital or pray for. And it's certainly not a back-door way of holding people accountable for giving!

Rather, it's a declaration of belonging to this local Body. It's a way of saying formally,

*I am here at Roswell Community Church. I entrust myself to the church's care, protection, and authority. And I commit to be on mission with my brothers and sisters here—pursuing life and transformation through the Gospel in our people and communities.*

This isn't to say that membership doesn't have weight or significance. It does! It's an invitation to **commit** in a non-committal culture. It's an opportunity to both formally **entrust** and **pledge** yourself to others in a highly individualistic nation. Though the agreement does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his Bride, the Church (Ephesians 5.25). In Christ, we are **already members** of the universal Church—the family of God—but membership in a local church is an opportunity to formally declare our participation in a local body of disciples.

Being a member of Roswell Community Church is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they unite in loving God, each other, and the world. Those who enter into membership with their local church commit to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders covenant to assist members, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..."*

1 Peter 4.8-10

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Christianity means community *through* Jesus Christ and *in* Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this... In Jesus Christ we belong to one another...

The goal of all Christian community: they meet one another as bringers of the Gospel.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

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Membership at Roswell Community Church is a two-way pledge between an individual and the Body at Roswell, particularly the elders and pastors.

The agreement from the leadership at Roswell Community Church to its members is the pledge of our protection, guidance, care, and discipline if ever needed for your transformation into Christ-likeness for the glory of God.

For the member, the agreement is comprised of:

1. A statement of personal faith in Jesus Christ
2. An agreement with the Doctrine that is proclaimed and practiced at Roswell Community Church
3. A commitment to the Mission of the church
4. A pledge to give oneself away to the people and vision of this local Body

In preparation for membership, we ask that you read this membership booklet, attend one of our membership classes and listen to the sermon on church discipline at [roswellchurch.org](http://roswellchurch.org).

When you are ready to complete the membership process, fill out the My Commitment Card inserted in this booklet and give it to one of the pastors or elders. Upon receipt of the card, an elder will contact you to set up an interview to accept your commitment and confirm RCC's commitment to you. After the interview, you will be a member of Roswell Community Church. Formal recognition and welcoming of new members during our worship service is typically done quarterly.



## I. STATEMENT OF FAITH

- I believe Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, God's Messiah, and the only hope of the world.  
Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70;  
John 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:5
- I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ.  
1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Therefore, I am a Christian saved from judgment and the wrath of God by Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through His death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life.  
John 3:16-18; Romans 3:23-26
- In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized. If not, I am committed to being baptized.  
Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21

## II. STATEMENT OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

- I agree with the core beliefs of Roswell Community Church, which are founded upon the Bible and expressed in the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed and RCC's Doctrinal Statement.
- I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters.  
Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-16; Hebrews 4:12

- I have listened to the sermon on church discipline ([roswellchurch.org](http://roswellchurch.org)) and understand the importance of submission to church leadership. I will be diligent to preserve unity and peace. I will adhere to Roswell Community Church's position on primary theological issues and I will not be divisive over secondary issues.

Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:7, 17

### III. **COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION OF RCC**

The mission of Roswell Community Church is to glorify God by pursuing Gospel Transformation through Jesus Christ.

I commit to participate in this mission as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### IV. **MY COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL GROWTH**

- I will seek to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus. By God's grace, in my pursuit of this relationship I will strive to foster a worshipping heart, to live in honest and loving community with other Christians, to soak in the Word of God, to develop a praying life with my Father, and to serve those around me sacrificially.

Psalms 105:1-2; Psalm 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 1:3

- As Christ has saved me from my sins and made me a righteous heir of eternal life, I will seek to live a life worthy of this calling in my thoughts, words, and deeds. When I sin, I will



remember the Gospel, bring my sin “into the light,” acknowledging and confessing it to Christian brothers or sisters who will strive to help me put my sin to death.

Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:7; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10

- I will seek to reflect the Gospel by living a generous life with regard to the time, talents, and resources God has entrusted to me.

Proverbs 3:9-10; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:1-16; 5:15-18; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11

- I will make the Sunday worship service of RCC a priority through regular attendance.

Hebrews 10:25

- I agree to follow biblical procedures in the way I confront brothers and sisters in Christ and to submit to loving confrontation when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ. I agree, if the need should arise, to submit to church discipline by the Elders. I understand that the Elders reserve the right, out of love and concern for my soul, to exercise discipline even if I choose to renounce my membership at RCC.

Psalms 141:5; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1-5 8; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Hebrews 12:5-11; Hebrews 13:17; Revelation 2:5-7, 14-25

- If I have any questions or concerns regarding Roswell Community Church, I will bring them to the leadership so we can discuss them.

- If at any time I can no longer fulfill this commitment to Roswell Community Church, I will notify the leadership.

## **COMMITMENT OF RCC TO ITS MEMBERS:**

- We covenant that your elders will meet the criteria the Scriptures assign to their position.  
1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4
- We covenant to seek God's will and not our own for our church to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit.  
Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5
- We covenant to care for you and seek your transformation as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service and praying for you regularly.  
Ephesians 4:11-13
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture.  
Acts 20:27-28; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers.  
Acts 20:28-31
- We covenant to exercise church discipline should it be needed.  
Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the mission and duties of the church.  
2 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12

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How true membership in a body differs from inclusion in a collective may be seen in the structure of a family. The grandfather, the parents, the grown-up son, the child, even the dog, and the cat are true members (in the organic sense), precisely because they are not members or units of a homogeneous class. They are not interchangeable. Each person is almost a species in himself. The mother is not simply a different person from the daughter; she is a different kind of person. The grown-up brother is not simply one unit in the class children; he is a separate estate of the realm. The father and grandfather are almost as different as the cat and the dog. If you subtract any one member, you have not simply reduced the family in number; you have inflicted an injury on its structure.

*C.S. Lewis*





[roswellchurch.org](http://roswellchurch.org)