

Doctrinal Statement of The Grove Church, Spruce Pine, NC

At The Grove Church, we exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who know Him deeply, love Him fully, and follow Him faithfully. This Doctrinal Statement serves as a foundational guide for our identity, mission, and practice, defining our confession of the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—His sovereign rule over creation and providence, the authority of Scripture as His inspired Word, the desperate need of humanity due to sin, and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ by grace alone through faith alone. This statement also seeks to unite The Grove Church in a shared understanding of the Gospel and in worship, and to ground us in hope so that we may live for the glory of God and faithfully carry out the mission of making disciples—so that all people might come to know and enjoy the greatness of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Doctrine of God

We believe in one God eternally existing as one essence and three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God, yet there is one God.

The Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. As the immortal and eternal Creator with no beginning and no end (Ps. 90:2), He sovereignly sustains and rules over all His creation (Ps. 24:1) and is, therefore, worthy to receive all glory and adoration. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect in all His attributes. He is omnipotent and governs all His creation with great power and might (Dan 4:35). He is omnipresent and occupies all of creation (Ps 139:7-10). He is omniscient and knows every detail of His creation including past, present, and future (Ps. 139:1-4). God is holy, or set apart, from all other beings in these perfections because He is transcendent (Isa. 6:3). He is love, and His greatest demonstration of love is sending His Son Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for our sins (1 Jn 4:19). God is immutable and never changes in His being, in His character, and in His promises to us (Heb 13:8). God is good to all His creation, even to His enemies (Mt 5:43-45). And God is truth: all that He reveals is truth, and it is impossible for God to make mistakes (Titus 1:2). This great God brings about His eternal good purposes to redeem a people for Himself and to restore His fallen creation to the praise of His glorious grace.

Each person of the Trinity has precisely the same nature and is worthy of precisely the same worship, honor, praise, and obedience. The entire Christian faith is bound together with the confession of God's Trinitarian nature (Matt. 28:18-20).

We believe that God the Father is the supreme, infinite, personal spirit who reigns over all things (John 4:24, Ps. 83:18, Eph. 1:11). In the works of creation and salvation, He is the perfect author and architect who works all things according to the purpose of His own eternal glory and praise (1 Peter 1:3, Isaiah 45:12, Dan 4:35). While He is the Creator of all things and all people, He provides a special fatherly affection for those He has sovereignly chosen to become children of God through faith in His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4, Luke 10:21, John 1:12-13).

We believe that God the Son, Jesus Christ, is God from God, eternally begotten but not made, who in history assumed to Himself a human nature for the sake of our salvation (John 1:14). He is fully God and fully man (Gal 4:4). Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him all things hold together by the word of His power (Col. 1:15-20, Heb 1:3). He was miraculously born of the Holy Spirit, lived a perfectly obedient life (Heb 4:15), then suffered, died, was buried, resurrected, ascended, and now sits at the right hand of the Father until He returns for the Final Judgment and consummation of the Kingdom.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son and is sent by the Father and Son to give new life (John 15:26-27). He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God, the third person of the Trinity. By His powerful and mysterious work, the Holy Spirit applies the salvation that has been accomplished by the Son to all of God's chosen people by regenerating spiritually dead sinners and awakening them to repentance and faith. In Him all believers 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 (Titus 3:5-7). The Holy Spirit dwells within all the redeemed and is Himself the down payment and eternal seal of the promised inheritance given to every believer at the time of conversion (Eph 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father (Jn 15:26). He does this by convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn 16:8-11), and by leading the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word (Jn 16:13). In this age, the Spirit indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service. To this end, when believers are adopted into God's family, renewed, and sanctified by the Spirit, they participate by His agency in the divine nature and receive His sovereignly distributed gifts (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Doctrine of Revelation

God has made Himself known to the world in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and Creation.

We believe that God has graciously made Himself known to His fallen creation. He has revealed Himself to us in His Son, the incarnate Word (Heb. 1:1-2); in Scripture, the inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16); and in creation (Ps. 8). He is so evident in His creation that mankind is without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the perfect revelation of who God is. Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), “the exact imprint of His nature” (Heb. 1:3), and a perfect reflection of God the Father (John 5:19).

We believe the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God (2 Peter 1:17-21) and are, therefore, without error in their original writings. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God which is utterly authoritative and free from error (John 17:17). The Scripture is sufficient for all that God requires for us to believe and do (2 Tim 3:16-17). Therefore, Scripture is to be believed as God’s instruction in all that it teaches; it is to be obeyed as God’s command in all that it requires; and it is to be trusted as God’s pledge in all that it promises (Is. 40:6-8). We believe the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind of the believer through the reading and teaching of the inspired Word so that we are better able to understand the truth (2 Co 2:9-16). As God’s people hear, believe and obey the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the Gospel (Rom. 10:14-17).

Doctrine of Creation and Providence

We believe that the Triune God created the universe and everything in it for His glory, that He continues to govern all things at all times in all places, and that mankind, therefore, owes Him our worship and obedience.

In display of His immense power and for His glory (Isa 43:7), God spoke the whole world and all creatures into existence from nothing (Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 24:1; Jn 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2, 11:3), and it was very good. Further, He continues to cause the world to exist. “In Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17), and “He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything... that they should seek God...” (Acts 17:25-28).

God directly and immediately created Adam from the dust of the ground, and He created Eve from Adam’s side as the historical parents of the entire human race (Gen 2:7, 2:21-22, 1 Cor 15:45). They were created male and female equally in the image of

God (Gen 1:27, 9:6, Jas 3:9), free of sin (Gen 1:31). As His agents, they were designed to glorify their Maker, Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all-sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel (Gen 2:15-20, I Chron. 16:23-36, Psalm 95:6, 1 Tim 4:7-8, 1 Cor 10:31, Eph 2:10, Rev 4:11).

Doctrine of Humanity

We believe that all humanity is created in the image of God and possesses intrinsic dignity and worth.

God made humanity in His own image (Gen. 1:27-30). Set apart as His image bearers, every human being —male and female—is sacred and is meant to represent God in His creation (1 Cor. 10:31). Together they are to care for, manage, and govern over it. Men and women enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). Both are called to move beyond self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, Church, and civic life (Titus 2:1-6). Adam and Eve were made to complement each other (Gen 2:18, Eph 5:22-33, 1 Cor 11:3) in a one-flesh union (the covenant of marriage) that pictures Christ's love for His Church and establishes the only God-ordained pattern of sexual relations for men and women (Gen 2:24, 1 Co 7:2-5). In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways.

Distinctive - Complementarianism

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value, but are distinct in role by God's perfect design.

At creation, God created both man and woman in the image of God and gave them both the mandate to be fruitful, to multiply, and to have dominion over the rest of creation (Gen 1:27-28, 1 Pet 3:7). As a reflection of His own relational character within the Trinity, God determined to create both male and female to promote a beautiful relationship that fosters fellowship, partnership, and unity for the glory of God (Gen 2:18-25). After the Fall, this wonderful reality was not destroyed, but it was polluted by sin, which brought conflict and strife between male and female. This was part of God's curse due to humanity's rebellion against Him, their good Creator (Gen 3:16-21). By God's grace, the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, redeems His people from the curse, makes them His

cherished bride, adopts them as sons of God, and unites them once again to a beautiful fellowship and unity for the glory of God. Our God-given differences as male and female remain, but in Christ, our ultimate identity is found as equal heirs to the promise, one in Christ Jesus (Gen 3:15, Gal 3:13, 26-29; Eph 5:29-32).

As it relates to marriage, the husband is to exercise headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, giving his very life for his wife and prioritizing her needs. The wife is to respect and voluntarily place herself under the leadership of her husband in a way that models the love of the Church for her Lord (Eph 5:21-33).

As it relates to the Church, men and women are both expected to lead and serve in many ways. Both are called and equipped by God to edify the Church with spiritual gifts, and to teach the next generation how to live for the Lord (Titus 2:1-8, 2 Tim 1:5, Acts 18:26, 1 Co 12:4-6). Both, when qualified, are invited to serve the Church family as deacons (Rom 16:1); however, the office of elder (and the work of preaching in the public gathering) is reserved for qualified men (1 Tim. 2:12, 3; Titus 1).

Doctrine of Sin and The Fall

We believe that sin has corrupted all things, leaving the world in desperate need of salvation.

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 (Gen 3; Rom 5:12-17; 1 Cor 15:22). As a result, all human beings are born alienated from God (Rom 3:10-18), corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually), and condemned finally and irrevocably to death (Eph 2:1-3). The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God, under whose just and holy wrath we stand (Rom 5:18-21; Col 1:21-23).

Doctrine of Salvation

We believe the good news of the Gospel that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

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 (John 1:14). 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 (Heb 4:15), performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day (1 Cor 15:3-6,20), and ascended into heaven. He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God's sovereignty, and He is interceding for us as our High Priest and righteous Advocate (Heb 2:17-18).

We believe that by His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative, substituting Himself to bear God's wrath and punishment on sinful humanity (2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 Peter 3:18). He did this so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (1 Co 1:30; Isa 59:2). On the cross Jesus canceled our record of sin debt (Col 2:14); He propitiated (satisfied) the justice of God (Rom 3:25; 1 Jn 2:2); and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, He reconciled to God all those who believe (Rom 5:10; Col 1:22). By His resurrection, Christ Jesus was vindicated by His Father, Satan's power over death and those enslaved to sin was broken (Heb 2:14), and everlasting life was given 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 (Acts 4:12).

We believe that, due to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again (John 3:5-8); that salvation is only by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ; and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are declared righteous by God and become children of God (Heb.10:19-25).

We believe that the Bible teaches that regeneration, or the new birth, is the act of God by which the Holy Spirit imparts a new nature and a new spiritual life, not before possessed; the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2:20). The mind is given a new desire and ability to serve God, the dominion of sin is broken, and the heart is transformed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God.

We believe that all believers who experience this new birth undergo the lifelong process of sanctification (Rom 8:4-6, 9-10; 1 Cor 1:2, 1 Pet 1:2). This process, by which the Spirit makes us more and more like Christ, will always be incomplete in this life (2 Cor 3:17-18). Although our slavery to sin is broken and our sinful desires are progressively

weakened by the power of a greater satisfaction in Christ, there remain remnants of corruption in every heart that give rise to an ongoing war between the flesh and the Spirit (Rom 7:15-25). This reality calls for vigilance in the believer's lifelong fight of faith (Gal 5:16-25, Phil 2:12-13, 1 Thes. 4:3). Nevertheless, the Christian's hope remains in the finished work of Christ and in His promise to keep us until the end (Rom. 8:1, 31-39).

We believe that all who have been truly born again and justified by faith will endure to the end. Because of the faithfulness of God in their lives, those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace but shall persevere. Christians may fall into sin, grieve the Holy Spirit, bring reproach to the name of Christ, and face the discipline of a loving Father, yet they shall be kept by a Shepherd who will not lose one of His sheep. All who have been foreknown, predestined, called, and justified by God will be glorified (Rom 8:30, Jude 24-25, John 6:37-40, 10:28-29, Heb 12:7-11).

Distinctive - Sovereignty of God in Salvation

We believe that before the foundation of the world God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation. To this end, He foreknew them and chose them (Eph 1:3-6; 1 Thes 1:4-5; Rom 8:29-30).

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; He is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Cor 1:26-31).

The salvation of humanity, therefore, is fundamentally the work of God who sets His affection and grace upon them. In love, God the Father predestines His people for adoption. Faith is a gift of grace that is given by the mercy and pleasure of God so that no one may boast. Apart from the intervention of God, humanity cannot choose of its own accord to worship God and pursue righteousness (Rom. 3; Eph. 2:1-10). Repentance is both a saving grace and a sacred duty, in which a person is drawn by the kindness of God to turn with genuine grief and hatred for sin and to turn to Christ with all one's heart and soul. (Rom 2:4, Mk 1:15).

God's sovereignty in salvation is comprehensive: from first to last, all of salvation is the work of God (2 Cor 5:18, Jonah 2:9). Just as God is the Author of salvation who initiates the saving relationship with His people, He is the One who faithfully

accomplishes their salvation and finishes the work He begins in them. He chose His people before the foundation of the world, and He will be worshipped by His glorified Church for all eternity. (Phil 1:6, Eph 1:4, Rom 8:29-30, Rev 22:1-5).

Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ sent into the world to shine forth the glory of God.

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church. His Church is made up of sinful people who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel.

The Church is the bride of Christ, and He has pledged Himself to her forever (Eph 5:25-32). 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 (Eph 2:11-19). 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 themselves. The Church, locally and globally, is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness of God in the world.

The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). The Church is called to make disciples through worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances, faithful church discipline, fellowship, the exercise of our gifts and talents, and the proclamation of the Gospel both in our community and throughout the world.

Ordinances of the Church

We believe there are two ordinances of the Church--baptism and communion.

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Triune God after their salvation (Acts 8:35-38; 10:44-48). This step of obedience to Christ's command is a testimony to God, to the Church, and to oneself and the world. It is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death, burial and resurrection. Baptism signifies that a former way of life has been put to death, and it vividly depicts the release from the mastery of Satan, sin, and death.

We believe baptism by immersion best represents and depicts the believer's spiritual union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-7).

Communion, also known as The Lord's Supper, symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf. It is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. Like water baptism, communion is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ (1 Cor 11:23-32). As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body. We also anticipate Christ's future return where believers will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that our sovereign God continues to make the gifts of the Holy Spirit displayed in the New Testament available and active within the Church. God purposes these gifts as He sees fit for authenticating the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and building His Church. At the same time, these gifts served a unique purpose within the life and mission of the Church and should not be considered as normative.

We do not believe that the miraculous gifts necessarily ended with the close of the New Testament or the death of the last apostle (1 Cor. 12:1-11). At the same time, these gifts served a unique purpose within the life and mission of the Church even in the days of the New Testament. Thus, they should not be considered as normative, especially in places where the Gospel has been clearly proclaimed and received by the people of God. While we affirm that God can work as He pleases in miraculous ways among His people, we also believe that God has called His people to test everything with the wisdom and discernment that the Holy Spirit provides (1 Thes 5:21). All authentic spiritual gifts are given by God for the purposes of bringing glory to the Son and of strengthening the Church through the Gospel. Therefore, the practice of all spiritual gifts should be done in a way that follows the direct instructions of Scripture and reflects the character of our God who is not a God of confusion, but of peace (1 Cor. 14). We believe that the Holy Spirit bestows at least one spiritual gift on every believer at the time of their conversion for the purposes of serving the Church and worshipping Christ (1 Co 12:6-7). No believer needs to wait for a second experience of grace to receive a spiritual gift or to prove they are in Christ; every Christian is able to serve the Lord from the moment they believe in Christ.

The Kingdom of God and the Restoration of all Things

We believe that Jesus Christ's invisible earthly Kingdom began in the hearts of Believers with His Resurrection and that He is returning to the world in the future to judge the living and the dead and to establish His visible reign.

We believe that 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. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. 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. 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 creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom; it regenerates and renovates, through repentance and faith, the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It, therefore, inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

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 will be consummated (1 Thes 4:13-18). 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 (Lk. 12:5, Mt 25:46), 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 (1 Co 15:51-55). On that day, Satan with His hosts and all those outside Christ, will be finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment (Rev. 20:7-15). But the righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new (Rev. 21:1-5). On that day the Church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering, and triumph of Christ. All sin will be purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all, and His people will be enthralled by His holiness, and everything will be to the praise of His glorious grace (Jude 24-25).