



## Statement of Faith

The Forest Church is a church under the headship of Jesus Christ. We are fully committed to the Scriptures, as the one and only true God's complete revelation to man of Himself. Situated within the historic Christian church we as believers hold to the historic confessions of the Apostle's, Chalcedon and Nicene Creeds, believing them to be statements that hold true to Scripture in their affirmations and summations. Additionally we are within the Baptist, Evangelical and Reformed traditions.

The basic doctrines within The Forest Church Statement of Faith represent what we believe as central elements of biblical teaching. Members of this church, will also affirm these same biblical doctrines.

The distinctives within The Forest Church Statement of Faith reflect specific ways in which this body will exist, be led and differ from other bodies that affirm the same basic doctrines of the Bible.. We do not expect all members to embrace all aspects of these distinctives, however it should be known that these distinctives will be held throughout the entirety of the church as it operates.

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The Forest Church Statement of Faith uses ideas and specific elements from:

- The Gospel Coalition Foundations of the Faith<sup>1</sup>
- The Southern Baptist Convention Statement of Faith<sup>2</sup>
- The Lausanne Covenant Statement of Faith<sup>3</sup>
- The Village Church Statement of Faith<sup>4</sup>
- Distinctives as Related to the Acts 29 Statement of Faith<sup>5</sup>

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## 1. Scripture

God's Word (The Holy Bible) "was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man"<sup>2</sup>. The authority of Scripture as the total and complete arbiter of truth in all "domains of knowledge to which it speaks"<sup>1</sup>, extends from the infallible righteous character of it's divine author (the Triune God). "Therefore we affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only rule of faith and practice."<sup>3</sup> We also affirm the power of God's Word to accomplish His purpose of salvation "as all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation"<sup>2</sup>.

"The message of the Bible is addressed to all men and women. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable."<sup>3</sup> Through it the Holy Spirit speaks to disclose the truth of God by illuminating the minds of God's people to perceive truth about Him. Therefore what is known about ourselves, others, and the world, is only known through the Holy Spirit's agency to reveal God through Christ to man by the Word.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16/ 2 Pet. 1:21/ John 10:35/ Isa. 55:11/ 1 Cor. 1:21/ Rom. 1:16-17/ Matt. 5:17-18/ Jude 3/ Eph. 1:17-18/ Eph. 3:10-12

## 2. The Triune God

“There is one and only one living and true God.”<sup>2</sup> He is eternal – qualitatively extending from eternity past to eternity future. His being lies totally outside of our relatable understanding of time, space and matter. He is omnipotent, omnificent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is totally holy in his existence (“other-than” intrinsically). He is intelligent, spiritual and personal; infinite in his holiness and in all other perfections, love being the highest order of his expression. He is One Being that “eternally exists in Three Equally Divine Persons that know, love and glorify one another”<sup>1</sup>, but are “without division of nature essence or being”<sup>2</sup>. He reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who know, love and glorify one another.

**“God the Father** reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.”<sup>2</sup>

Gen. 1:1; 2:7/ Ex. 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff/ Lev. 22:2/ Deut. 6:4; 32:6/ 1 Chron. 29:10/ Psa. 19:1-3/ Isa. 43:3,15; 64:8/ Jer. 10:10; 17:13/ Matt. 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19/ Mark 1:9-11/ John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8/ Acts 1:7; Rom. 8:14-15/ 1 Cor. 8:6/ Gal. 4:6/ Eph. 4:6/ Col. 1:15/ 1 Tim. 1:17/ Heb. 11:6; 12:9/ 1 Pet. 1:17/ 1 John 5:7

**“God the Son** is Christ. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

Gen. 18:1ff./ Psa. 2:7ff.; 110:1ff./ Isaiah 7:14; 53/ Matt. 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19/ Mark 1:1; 3:11/ Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46/ John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28/ Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20/ Rom. 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4/ 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28/ 2 Cor. 5:19-21; 8:9/ Gal. 4:4-5/ Eph. 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10/ Phil. 2:5-11/ Col. 1:13-22; 2:9/ 1 Thes. 4:14-18/ 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 3:16/ Tit. 2:13-14/ Heb. 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8/ 1 Pet. 2:21-25; 3:22/ 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9/ 2 John 7-9/ Rev. 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16

**“God the Holy Spirit** is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into union with Christ and therefore is not the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.”<sup>3</sup>

Gen 1:2/Jud. 14:6/ Job 26:13/ Psa. 51:11; 139:7ff./ Isa. 61:1-3/ Joel 2:28-32/ Matt. 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19/ Mark 1:10,12/ Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49/ John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14/ Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6/ Rom. 8:9-11,14-16,26-27/ 1

Cor. 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13/ Gal. 4:6/ Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18/ 1 Thes. 5:19/ 1 Tim. 3:16; 4:1/ 2 Tim. 1:14; 3:16/ Heb. 9:8,14/ 2 Pet. 1:21/ 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7/ Rev. 1:10; 22:17

### 3. Humanity

“We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in His own image. Adam and Eve (the first created human beings) 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 to 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 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.”<sup>1</sup> “This principle of male headship should not be confused with, nor give any hint of, domineering control. Rather, it is to be the loving, tender and nurturing care of a godly man who is himself under the kind and gentle authority of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Gen 1:26-27; 2:18; 2:22-25/ 1 Cor. 11:2-16/ Gal. 3:28/ Eph. 5:22-33/ Col. 3:18-21/ 1 Pet. 3:1-7

“Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in the home, but God has given the man primary responsibility to lead his wife and family in accordance with the servant-leadership and sacrificial love characterized by Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Eph. 6:1-4/ Col. 3:18-21/ 1 Tim. 3:1-7/ 1 Pet. 3:7

“In the ministry of the church, both men and women are together recipients of spiritual gifts designed to empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. Therefore women, just as men, are to be encouraged, equipped and empowered to utilize their gifting in ministry, in the service to the body of Christ and through teaching in ways that are consistent with the Word of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Acts 18:24-26/ 1 Tim. 2:11-15/ Titus 2:3-5

“The distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.”<sup>1</sup> “The Elders/Pastors of the local church have been granted authority under the headship of Jesus Christ to provide oversight and to teach/preach the Word of God in corporate assembly for the building up of the body. The office of Elder/Pastor is restricted to men.”<sup>5</sup>

1 Tim. 2:11-15/ 1 Tim. 3:1-7/ Tit. 1:6-9/ 1 Pet. 5:2-4

## 4. The Fall & Sin

“We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original holiness and righteousness by falling into sin (rebellion) through Satan’s temptation.”<sup>1</sup> This explicit transgression against God’s command fractured humanity as a whole. Everyone has descended from fallen man and therefore we are all born into sin as we begin life. “As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being”<sup>1</sup> (e.g., mind, body, will and affections) and justly condemned to death. This has left the entirety of the world in complete need of saving.

Sin, is at it’s core diametrically opposed to everything in the character of God. Sin is not merely something to be avoided but has so radically and pervasively penetrated humanity that it has positioned mankind in a hopeless state of total depravity before the one and only holy and righteous God – we are seen at enmity with Him. Unregenerate (unsaved) humanity lives in this state – under the dominion of sin and Satan.

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

Gen. 3/ Ex. 20:17/ Matt. 5:22; 5:28/ Rom. 2:15; 2:17-29; 3:9-20; 5:8/ Gal. 5:20/ Eph. 2:1-3/ 1 John 3:4

## 5. Salvation

“We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.”<sup>4</sup> It is the full acceptance and submission of the Good News (Gospel) of Jesus Christ as truth. “Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer.”<sup>2</sup> Because of the presence of death due to the existence of sin in the world, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again through a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (way, truth, life). “His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus acted as our representative and substitute. He did so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he cancelled sin, propitiated God, and by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe.”<sup>1</sup>

**Regeneration**, or the new birth, is that act of God by which the Holy Spirit gives a new nature and a new spiritual life, not before possessed, and a person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus. The dominion of sin is broken in a persons life and their mind is given a holy disposition and a new desire to serve God. Additionally the heart is transformed from a love of/for sin to a love of holiness and God.

“**Repentance** is the genuine turning from sin toward God.”<sup>2</sup>

**Faith** is the acceptance of the person of Jesus Christ in his conception, his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension and his lordship. It is commitment to Him as the only way truth and life as your Lord and Savior.

“**Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal (based solely upon His own righteousness) of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.”<sup>2</sup>

“**Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the

presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life."<sup>2</sup>

**"Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed"<sup>2</sup> when our faith in Jesus will be manifested in a face-to-face reality of enjoying his personal presence forever.

Gen. 3:15/ Exo. 3:14-17; 6:2-8/ Matt. 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6/ Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32/ John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17/ Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32/ Rom. 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14/ 1 Cor. 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10/ 2 Cor. 5:17-20/ Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15/ Eph. 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16/ Phil. 2:12-13/ Col.1:9-22; 3:1ff./ 1 Thes. 5:23-24/ 2 Tim. 1:12/ Tit. 2:11-14/ Heb. 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14/ Jam. 2:14-26/ 1 Pet. 1:2-23/ 1 John 1:6-2:11/ Rev. 3:20; 21:1-22:5

## Sovereignty (distinctive)

We believe "that God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith to come but unconditionally, according to His sovereign good pleasure and will"<sup>3</sup>. He has determined by grace to save a great multitude of sinners from every tribe, tongue, language, people and nation, and it is in this way He foreknew them. Consistent with the free agency of man, God's sovereign grace to save comprehensively involves "all means in connection with the end"<sup>2</sup>.

"Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, and as a result they will grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves."<sup>2</sup> However "those whom God has accepted in Christ, and are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace they are in, but will persevere"<sup>2</sup> in belief and godly behavior by this grace through faith.

"We believe that God's sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ, nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes his ordained ends."

John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30/ Acts 13:48; 16:30-31/ Rom. 3:1-4:25; 8:1-17, 31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10/ Eph. 1:4-5; 2:8-10/ Phil. 2:12-13/ Tit. 3:3-7/ 1 John 1:7-9

## 6. The Kingdom of God

"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 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. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God."<sup>1</sup>

## 7. The Church

"God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful humanity into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Church is an extension of the ministry of Jesus in the power of the Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

"The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples. The Church is called to make disciples through worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances, fellowship, the exercise of our gifts and talents, and the proclamation of the gospel both in our community and throughout the world."<sup>4</sup>

"We believe there are two ordinances of the Church. One is that of believer's baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the other is the Lord's Supper."<sup>4</sup>

"Water baptism is only intended for those who have received the saving benefits of Christ through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. In obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself and the world, believers are baptized by water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts the release from the mastery of Satan, sin and death."<sup>4</sup>

"As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body."<sup>4</sup>

Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-20; 28:18-20 / Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28 / Rom. 1:7 / 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12:12-21 / Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32 / Phil. 1:1 / Col. 1:18 / 1 Tim. 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14 / Heb. 11:39-40 / 1 Pet. 5:1-4 / Rev. 2-3; 21:2-3

## Gifts of the Holy Spirit (distinctive)

"The gifts of the Holy Spirit that we see on display in the New Testament are still active within the life of the church. These gifts did not end with the close of the New Testament or the death of the last apostle."<sup>4</sup>

1 Cor. 12:1-11ff; 13; 14

## Baptism by Immersion (distinctive)

“The precedent we find in the New Testament is baptism following conversion by immersion into water. Baptism by immersion is meant to symbolically depict the believer’s real union to Christ in His death and resurrection.”<sup>4</sup>

Rom. 6:1-14

## 8. 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 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.”<sup>1</sup>

Isa. 2:4; 11:9 / Matt. 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64 / Mark 8:38; 9:43-48 / Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28 / John 14:1-3 / Acts 1:11; 17:31 / Rom. 14:10 / 1 Cor. 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58 / 2 Cor. 5:10 / Phil. 3:20-21 / Col. 1:5; 3:4 / 1 Thes. 4:14-18; 5:1ff. / 2 Thes. 1:7ff.; 2 / 1 Tim. 6:14 / 2 Tim. 4:1,8 / Tit. 2:13 / Heb. 9:27-28 / Jam. 5:8 / 2 Pet. 3:7ff. / 1 John 2:28; 3:2 / Jude 14 / Rev. 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13

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