

Doctrinal Statement of Upper Perkiomen Community Church

(Edition 09-12-16)

Scripture

We believe the Bible is the living and active revelation of God to humankind so that we may know Him and His will. The Scriptures are the very words of God that are powerful to transform lives and reveal all that is necessary for life and godliness (Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

As such the Bible is:

- The very Word of God without error in its entirety and in every part
- The authority for the faith and practice of the church and every Christian's life
- Historically consisting of the 66 books of the orthodox canon
- To be interpreted using a grammatical, historical, literal method

(Psalm 19:7-11; 119:89, 105; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 22:18-19)

God the Trinity

We believe that God is the personal, sovereign Lord of the universe who created the world, redeems it from sin, and will ultimately restore all things. God is triune, being one essence in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11).

As such God:

- Is unique and distinct from all created things
- Is eternal and absolute, existing outside of time and space
- Created all that exists by the direct command of His voice
- Has condescended in the person of His Son to bind himself to humankind in redemption
- God the Father is worthy of all glory and worship and will sovereignly bring to completion His eternal plan for His people and His world

(John 10:30; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:2-3; Revelation 4:11; Matthew 11:27; 24:36; John 8:16; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 4:6)

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the Savior of humankind through his death on the cross and his resurrection. He is the living and powerful Lord who is worthy of all worship (Col. 1:13-20; Mark 10:45).

As such Christ:

- Is fully God and was eternally in relation to the Father as a Son
- Was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life
- Became fully human and so was fully God and fully man at the same time, without distinction or separation, without confusion or mixture of natures
- Willingly died on the cross as a substitute for human beings, fully absorbing and satisfying the wrath of God for sin by shedding His blood

- Bodily rose from the grave on the third day to demonstrate His power over death, thereby conquering sin and death and destroying their power over God's children
- Ascended into heaven where He intercedes on behalf of believers until His return to earth

(Isaiah 53:1-12; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 14; John 14:6-11; Acts 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-28; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-4; 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1-2)

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts of truth and sin, grants new life to those who believe in Christ, indwells all believers at the time of salvation and transforms them into the image of Christ (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15).

As such, the Holy Spirit:

- Is equal with God the Father and God the Son
- Convicts unbelievers of sin, righteousness and judgment
- Indwells, seals and sanctifies believers
- Gifts, guides, teaches, comforts and helps believers
- Restrains evil in the world until God's purposes are fulfilled

(John 3:5-7; Romans 8:1-17, 26-27; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 2:18; 5:18)

Spirit Beings

We believe that God created spirit beings, some of whom remained faithful to God (angels) and worship and serve Him eternally, and some of whom rebelled (demons) and work against the plans and purposes of God until their final judgment (Isaiah 6:1-3; Ephesians 6:11-12).

As such:

- Angels are supernatural, personal beings, yet not created in the image of God
- Angels are ministers of God to carry out his purposes and aid believers
- Satan is the chief of those demons who rebelled and works to undermine God's eternal plan
- Satan is the enemy of all believers, accusing, tempting and deceiving whenever he can, and will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire along with all demons and humans who follow him.

(Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11; 25:41; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10; 20:1-2, 7-10)

Man

We believe that people were created in the image of God, are born with a knowledge of God, and have been cursed by sin, so that they are separated from God and stand in condemnation under his wrath (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 5:12-21).

As such human beings:

- Are unique in God's creation, being the only part of it that bears God's image

- 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.
- Have inherited Adam's sin, which is the transgression of God's law
- Are born as sinners and remain so unless and until they are redeemed by God
- Are completely depraved and will not seek God until He first draws them to Himself
- Possess life beginning at conception that is to be cherished and protected until God decides to withdraw it
- 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. (1 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; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)
- 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; 1 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 Scripture nor the doctrines of UPCC.

(Genesis 2:17-24; 3:1-7; Psalm 8:3-8; 58:3; Romans 1:20; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 5:22-32)

Salvation

We believe that salvation is a free gift of God's grace based on the atoning work of Christ, and is received by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone (John 3:16; Titus 3:5).

As such salvation:

- Is complete union with Christ in which a believer becomes eternally joined with Christ spiritually
- Is consciously received by faith when a person freely believes in Christ as the only way to salvation
- Takes place by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit as He convicts an unbeliever of sin, and draws that person to Christ
- Includes the legal act of justification whereby God declares a sinner to be righteous by applying the sinner's sin to Christ's account and Christ's righteousness to the sinner's account
- Includes the experiential act of sanctification whereby the Holy Spirit transforms a believer into the image of Christ

- Is an *event* of regeneration that takes place at a point in one's life, and a *process* of sanctification by the Holy Spirit that is completed only at death

(John 1:12; Romans 6:23, 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 9:24-28; Revelation 1:5)

The Church

We believe that the church is the living body of Christ and is his representative in this world. The church consists of all believers who have placed their faith in Christ. The church finds its primary expression in local assemblies of believers dedicated to the faithful preaching of the Word, the administration of the ordinances of baptism by immersion after salvation and the Lord's Supper, and discipline for the purity of the church (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 5:25-32).

As such the church:

- Is distinct from the Old Testament people of Israel, consisting of believers from Pentecost to the rapture of the church
- Is primarily under the Lordship of Christ, its head
- Is led by pastor/elders, served by deacons, and governed by the vote of the congregation
- Is open to membership to all who confess their faith in Christ for salvation, have been baptized by immersion after salvation, and wish to follow the leadership and direction of the church
- Gathers for the purpose of corporate worship and edification and scatters for the purpose of evangelism
- Is a necessary part of a believer's life and growth, and is the training ground for serving God and each other
- Is independent of outside authority, both religious and civil, while recognizing its need to obey the laws of the land unless they clearly contradict the Scriptures
- Is called to be separate from unbelief and unbiblical practices

(Matthew 18:15-20; 28:18-20; Acts 4:32-37; Ephesians 1:20-23; 3:3-11; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-15; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

Future Events

We believe that Jesus Christ will bodily return to earth, remove his Bride, the Church, judge the world, and rule on earth for 1000 years before the final judgment that precedes his eternal rule (Acts 1:6-11; Revelation 1:4-8).

As such:

- The church awaits the imminent, any-moment return of Christ

- At the resurrection the souls of those who have died will be reunited with their bodies in preparation for eternity
- Jesus Christ will reward believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ for their actions after salvation
- God will condemn those who have rejected Christ to eternal separation from his presence in hell, and will reward believers with eternal bliss in heaven with Him
- Hell is a place of real, conscious torment, just as heaven is a place of real, conscious bliss

(John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 19-21)