

St. Stephen's Church Statement of Faith

I. THE HOLY TRINITY

We believe in one living and true God, eternal and of infinite power, wisdom, goodness and righteousness. He is a loving and faithful God who is the Creator and preserver of all things (Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 10:10; 1Timothy 1:17). In the unity of this Godhead there are three persons of one substance with identical qualities and attributes: the Father (God), the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1,2; 4:24; 5:18; 10:30).

II. THE SON OF GOD

We believe in the divine nature of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. Christ was both fully man and fully God. He walked our earth, suffered at the hands of men, was crucified, died and was buried as a sacrifice for the sins of all men and women everywhere. The purpose was to restore our relationship to God which was broken by sin and disobedience (Luke 1:27; 31:35; John 3:16; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 5:2). Christ arose from the dead and ascended into heaven in fully victory over Satan and sin. He now intercedes for the body of believers to God the Father (Matthew 28:5-9; Luke 24:4-7).

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the person of the Holy Trinity who lives within us, giving us power to live a holy life and guiding us to truth (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6).

IV. THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments combined, constitute the Holy Bible-no books added or deleted. The Holy Bible is inspired and inerrant (that is, without error or failure of basic contents and meaning in the original manuscripts). The Holy Bible contains all necessary truth to lead men and women into salvation (Psalm 19:7; John 17:17; Romans 15:4; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15-17).

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V. MAN

We believe that mankind was created by God in His own image (Genesis 1:27), but because of Adam's sin (disobedience) man inherits a corrupt nature that inclines him to do wrong (Genesis 3:6; 6:5; Romans 5:12).

Man is not capable of achieving a life without sin on his own (Proverbs 20:9; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16). Because man is created in God's own image, we have a "god-likeness" which includes knowledge between right and wrong, the ability to choose which course we will take, and the responsibility for our actions, or our choices (Joshua 24:15; I Kings 20:40; John 7:17)

VI. SALVATION

We believe that Jesus Christ, the living Son of God, was given by God as a sacrifice for the sins of all men. Christ died on the cross to mend the broken relationships which were caused by man's sin of disobedience.

The severed relationship between God and man may be restored into perfect harmony through belief in Jesus Christ by faith, and not on the basis of our works (Galatians 5:4,5; Ephesians 2:8,9). This belief and faith in Jesus Christ, recognizing Him as Lord and Savior, gives men and women the free gift of eternal life (John 1:29; 3:16; I Cor. 5:7; I Peter 1:19). After receiving salvation by faith through belief in Jesus Christ, the "born-again" (John 3:3) believer may live free from the judgement of God, by living a life according to the teaching of the scriptures and trusting the Holy Spirit for the power to live a holy life according to God's Word. We believe that after we have experienced regeneration it is possible to fall into sin, for in this life there is no such height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But by the grace of God, one who has fallen into sin may, by confession and true repentance, find forgiveness and restored fellowship with God (Matthew 18:21,22; I John 1:9; 2:1; 24-25).