

Doctrinal Summary

A Word from the Elders

God's Word reveals to us His eternal wisdom that is unchangeable and unalterable, manifested in the Person and propitiatory work of His Son, Jesus Christ. All of Scripture is breathed out by God, given by the Holy Spirit, and it teaches us, reproveth us, corrects us and trains us so we will be complete in Christ, equipped for life and godliness; each precious promise a live-giving anchor to our souls.

At Lighthouse it is our great joy to preach the Christ-centered message of the Word, *"that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end we also labor, striving according to His working which works in us mightily"* (Colossians 1:28-29).

May God bless you richly as you taste and see for yourselves that the LORD is good, joining us in magnifying Him for the all-surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our Convictions:

We believe that God's infallible Word, as found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the source and norm for all faith and practice in Christ's church. We hold that Word to be both effective and sufficient for our needs in His service. Furthermore, we affirm the following Reformation principles as vital summaries of biblical teaching:

- *Sola Scriptura*: The inerrant Scripture is the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience.
- *Solus Christus*: Our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone.
- *Sola Gratia*: In salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by His grace alone. Salvation is not in any sense our world.

- *Sola Fide*: Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.
- *Soli Deo Gloria*: Because salvation is God and has been accomplished by God, it is for His glory. Therefore, we must glorify Him always.

Doctrinal Specifics

•The Bible, The Word of God:

We believe and teach that the Bible consists of 66 books (Genesis through Malachi and Matthew through Revelation), and was written by holy men of God who were controlled by the Holy Spirit so that the result of this cooperative work is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. Though we do not possess the actual original physical documents of Scripture, we believe that the Holy Spirit has guided individuals throughout history to preserve accurate copies of the originals. Therefore, in its present form the Bible is trustworthy and infallible in whole or in part. The Bible perfectly reveals the will of God, and therefore is the basis for Christian unity and the standard by which all conduct, creeds and opinions should be judged (II Peter 1:19-21; Psalm 19:7-14; II Timothy 3:15-17).

•God, The Holy Trinity:

We believe and teach there is but one living and true God who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. He is absolutely separate from and above the world as its Creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the one upholder of all things. We further believe and teach that God is one in essence, but eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections. Each is worthy of precisely the same worship, confidence and obedience (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; Matthew 28:19; Mark 10:18; John 4:24; 10:30; Acts 17:24-29; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:3-14; 4:6).

•God The Father:

We believe and teach that God the Father disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption. He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 103:19; 145:8-9; John 1:18; Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:3-6; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 1:17).

•God The Son:

We believe and teach that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We also believe and teach in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people and His personal, visible return from heaven (John 1:1-29; 8:46; 10:36; Acts 2:30-33; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; II Corinthians 5:19-21; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; 7:25; 10:5-10; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 20:11-15).

•God The Holy Spirit:

We believe and teach that God the Holy Spirit has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Son. We believe and teach His work in regeneration, sanctification and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost, empowering the believer for godly living and service. We believe and teach that He alone administers spiritual gifts to the church, not to glorify Himself or the gifts, but to glorify Jesus Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:5; 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:22; II Thessalonians 2:13).

•Man, His Creation And Fall:

We believe and teach that God created mankind, male and female, in His own image, with moral responsibility to God. He was created in righteousness and holiness, though capable of sinning (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Psalm 16:11;

42:1-2; 43:4; 63:1; 36:8; 34:8; 119:103; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11). By voluntary disobedience, Adam, the first man, fell from that happy and holy state. As a result, Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception, and all mankind are now sinners by nature. From birth all are utterly void of the righteousness required by God and are positively inclined to evil. Therefore, all are under God's righteous condemnation to eternal ruin and without any excuse or hope apart from the love and grace of God (Genesis 1-3; Romans 5:12-19; Romans 3:9-19; Ephesians 2:1-10).

•God's Gracious Plan:

We believe and teach that God freely, sovereignly and graciously chose specific sinners from eternity to share in His salvation in Jesus Christ. God graciously regenerates, justifies, sanctifies and preserves His chosen ones in time, through the Gospel (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2). Sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). God's sovereign and gracious plan always includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation, as well as the gift itself. Therefore, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8). God's gracious plan should not be looked upon as based on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; II Timothy 1:9).

•The Way Of Salvation:

We believe and teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He is the mediator between God and man. In obedience to the Father, He freely took upon Himself our human nature (yet without sin). He honored God's Law by His personal and complete obedience. By His death He atoned for the sins of His people. Having risen from the dead, He is now at the Father's right hand where He intercedes for us. As both God and man, He is in every way qualified to be

an all-sufficient Savior (Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 7:25; Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:3; Romans 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; Hebrews 2:9-18; Romans 4:25).

•**Regeneration:**

We believe and teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (John 3:1-13; Titus 3:4-6; John 1:12, 13). Regeneration consists in the impartation of Divine life to the soul, where the mind and heart are inclined toward God. It is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with the Word of the Gospel (John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 1:18), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. The evidence of regeneration consists in the holy fruit of repentance and faith leading to holiness and newness of life manifested in obedience to God's commandments (Ephesians 2:10; 4:17-24; 1 John 2:3-6).

•**Repentance And Faith:**

We believe and teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties and inseparable graces, brought about in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. In repentance and faith we turn to God with sincere contrition, confession and supplication for mercy, being deeply convinced of our guilt and helplessness and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Christ requires of His people a settled refusal to set any limits to the claims which He may make on their lives (Isaiah 1:16-17). At the same time, we heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ in His mediatorial offices as our Prophet, Priest and King and rely on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior (1 John 3:23; Acts 2:37-38; Ephesians 2:8; Acts 11:18; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-13).

•**Justification By Grace Through Faith:**

We believe and teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to believers is justification. Justification includes the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life on the basis of God's righteousness in Christ. It is bestowed, not in consideration of any works or merit which we have done, but solely through faith and on the basis of Christ's obedience and death. By virtue of Christ's obedience and death, His perfect righteousness is imputed to us by God. Justification brings us into a state of blessed peace and acceptance with God, establishes the basis for God's treatment of us as

sons and secures every other blessing needed for time and eternity (Romans 3:21-5:21; Romans 8:14-17; Romans 8:31-39; II Corinthians 5:21).

•**Free Offer Of The Gospel:**

We believe and teach that the blessings of salvation are offered freely to all without distinction by the Gospel. It is the immediate duty of all to accept these blessings by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing prevents the salvation of any sinner but his own inherent depravity and willful rejection of the Gospel. Such rejection aggravates the condemnation of the sinner (Isaiah 55:1-2; Matthew 23:37-39; Revelation 22:17; Acts 17:30; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 11:20-24; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 2:1-4; Romans 1:16-17).

•**Sanctification:**

We believe and teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) to God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). There is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:19; Romans 6:1-22; II Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23). Each saved person is involved in a daily conflict - the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh - but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

•**Perseverance Of The Saints:**

We believe and teach that all those whom the Father chose to life and redeemed in His Son and sanctified by His Spirit shall surely persevere to the end and be saved. Their love for Christ and perseverance in holiness are

the grand marks which distinguish them from false professors of the faith. A special providence watches over the welfare of believers and they are kept by the power of God through faith to the final salvation and glory (John 6:39, 44; Matthew 10:24-33; 1 Peter 2:1-12; Matthew 13:1-23; Romans 8:28-39; Matthew 25:1-13; John 10:26-29; 1 Peter 1:3-5; John 6:66-71).

•Church Of Christ:

We believe and teach that the Church of Jesus Christ in the most inclusive sense consists of all the elect of God who have or shall come to faith in His Word concerning Jesus Christ. This is the one Body of Christ. Visible love and unity ought to prevail among all true believers in our common Lord and we gladly pronounce a benediction upon all who love Him in sincerity. The primary emphasis given to the doctrine of the Church in the New Testament is to local churches in various geographical locations, each having its own ordinances, order and officers. These churches are congregations of baptized believers, associated in the fellowship of the Gospel for worship, ministry, evangelism, instruction and observance of the ordinances, according to the Word of God. Each church's officers includes Elders and Deacons; its only Head is Christ. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, each church is separate from the state, free from human ecclesiastical authorities and Divinely authorized to decide all its internal and external affairs and associations (Hebrews 12:22-24; Philippians 1:1; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:4-5; Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Hebrews 10:23-25; Revelation 2 & 3; John 17; Ephesians 4:1-11; Acts 2:37-47; Ephesians 6:24; Matthew 16:18; Acts 18:1-11; Galatians 1:2; Ephesians 2:11-3:21; 1 Timothy 3:1-15).

•Baptism And The Lord's Supper:

We believe and teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism shows our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite of membership in the local church (Acts 2:41; Acts 2:27-41; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-6). We believe and teach that the Lord's Supper is a sacred commemorative meal in which believers by partaking of bread and wine remember and proclaim the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ, until He returns. Participation of the Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Luke 22:17-20; Matthew 26:26-29).

•**The State:**

We believe and teach that Civil Government is ordained by God for the interests and good order of human society. We are to pray for civil leaders, honor them, submit to them, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures (Romans 13:1-10; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Acts 5:25-29).

•**Last Things:**

We believe and teach that at the Last Day the Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven and will be visibly manifested as Lord to the whole world. All who have died will be bodily raised. The Lord Jesus will judge and condemn all who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel, but He will bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him. The wicked will be condemned to everlasting torment in Hell. The Lord Jesus will glorify His elect and receive them into the everlasting joy of His presence. At His coming the Lord Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom. We confess our hope and confidence in these things with the prayer, *"Even so, Come, Lord Jesus"* (Acts 1:11; II Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21 & 22; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; John 6:37, 39, 44; II Thessalonians 1:6-10; II Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 9:28).