

Louisa Baptist Church Statement of Faith
Adopted March 3, 2019

Introduction: We the members of Louisa Baptist Church joyfully unite to affirm our common faith in the gospel of Jesus, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have been adopted by the Spirit into the community of believers, and because of His great love for us, we desire to spend the rest of our lives seeking to please Him. Since God loves all people and desires that his offer of grace be extended to everyone, we welcome all people to experience the life changing message of the gospel set forth in God's word which leads us into a relationship with Him.

Q: Who is God and what is He like?

A: God is the perfect and all-powerful ruler of the universe.

God is a spiritual being that has all power and is in complete control of everything that exists. There always has been and always will be only one God. God is completely perfect and unchanging in His character and nature. Thus, God defines and exemplifies for us what it means to be perfectly good, loving, just and merciful.ⁱ

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit each with distinct personal attributes but one in essence. Our heavenly Father is set apart in His role as ruler of the universe and the Godhead. Jesus is God's one and only Son and the ultimate way God has revealed Himself to humankind for our salvation and His glory. While, the Son has always existed and possesses all the power and divine nature of the Father, Jesus chose to humble himself to fulfill His Father's will. Though Jesus was born of a virgin as a human being, He retained His divine perfection. While Jesus is God's physical revelation of Himself, the Holy Spirit is God's permanent spiritual presence within Christians leading us to all truth.ⁱⁱ

Q: Where do we find truth?

A: The Bible is our source of truth.

The 66 books of the Bible are God's living truth given to humanity, written down according to His direction and inspiration. Because scripture comes from God it does not change and is completely true without error. Thus, the scripture unifies us as believers and is our sole authority for what we believe and the standards by how we should live. God's word can be trusted as a sufficient guide for understanding: who God is, how we can be saved, how His will applies to life, and who we are as people.ⁱⁱⁱ

Q: Who are we and where did we come from?

A: We are creations of God with eternal value.

According to God's infinite knowledge and perfect plan, the triune God created everything that exists. Through God's perfect design, humanity was created male and female as the crowning work of God's creation. God created humanity in His image in a way that makes us unique from the rest of creation. Humanity has the capacity for moral awareness and the free will to make moral decisions. Along with our mind and bodies, God endows each person with an eternal soul giving us the capacity to spiritually connect with a personal God. Because all humanity is created in God's image, all people are created equal and have eternal value. God created humanity for His glory, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him, and as His entrusted custodians of creation.^{iv}

Q: What is the problem in the world?

A: Our problem is the brokenness and suffering that has been caused by sin and Satan.

Since before the creation of humankind, Satan and his demons, have sought to replace God as ruler and ruin God's creation. Through the temptation of Satan, Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God. This resulted in a curse upon creation and all of humanity inheriting a spirit of rebellion toward God called a sin nature. Rejecting God's lordship has put humanity on the path that has led to spiritual death and separation from God. The evil of Satan, sinfulness of humanity and curse upon creation is the cause of death, evil and suffering in the world. Although humanity is fully responsible and without excuse for our rebellion towards God, in our fallen state, we are incapable of saving ourselves, pleasing God, or seeking a right standing with Him.^v

Q: How can I be saved?

A: We are saved by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Because of God's great love for us and according to His plan of redemption, the Father sent His son Jesus so that the world might be saved. Through His physical death on the cross, Jesus paid the debt that we owe, satisfying the just punishment for sin. Through His physical resurrection, Jesus not only proved the truthfulness of His message, He made a way for the relationship between the Father and humanity to be restored.^{vi}

Thus, there is only one way to be saved. We receive this gift of grace through faith in the work of Jesus Christ. For a person to experience saving faith they must receive forgiveness through belief in Jesus and confess Him as Lord, which is demonstrated through the repentance of a changed life. When we are saved the Holy Spirit eternally seals us with His presence. Thus, Christians can be confident in their salvation and the sufficiency of God's work of healing and redemption within them.^{vii}

Q: How do Christians interact with the World?

A: How we interact with the world is defined by the three institutions that God created: family, church and government.

The Family

According to God's perfect design, He has created the family as the foundational institution by which humanity interacts in the home, church and society. The family is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.^{viii}

While Christian singleness is its own unique calling and provides opportunity for the blessing of a life focused on serving the Lord, many individuals are called into marriage relationships. Marriage unites one man and one woman in an exclusive relationship. Marriage is a precious gift from God and is intended to bless the couple with mutual companionship, support, the only moral expression of sexuality, the means for the procreation of children, and is a union intended to last until the couple is separated by death. While husbands and wives are equally valuable before God, each is called to fulfill their unique role in the family as their love and mutual submission to one another reflects the relationship Christ has with His bride the church. Even though God's perfect plan for the family is our guide to righteousness and blessing, God wants every person to experience the healing power of His grace in the midst of an imperfect world.^{ix}

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Every child is a blessing from God and from the moment of their conception, are people created in the image of God with eternal value. God has entrusted every parent with the responsibility to model the love of God to their children and to guide them to maturity in their mental, physical, spiritual, and social development. Children are instructed to honor and obey their parents.^x

The Church

The global Christian church is comprised of all people who profess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The church is the ambassadors, body, and bride of Christ and the light of the world. As such, the church is called to be God's physical representative to proclaim the message of the gospel, connected and unified in our calling to show the love and compassion of God as we bring comfort and healing where there is confusion and hurt, set apart in our moral and spiritual purity as we wait expectantly for Christ's return, and give glory to God as we point others to Him.^{xi}

The global church is made up of many local congregations. While each individual congregation is accountable to God for their governance and faithfulness to the teachings of scripture, every congregation is united in the shared purpose of spreading the message of the gospel to every nation, tribe, people, and language. Scripture has established pastors/elders, deacons and teachers as positions of leadership in the local church. Leaders in the church are called to submit themselves to a higher standard. Congregations should lovingly hold their leaders accountable to the standards outlined in scripture and should prayerfully support and follow the leadership of their divinely appointed shepherds.^{xii}

As the church waits for the return of Christ it has been charged to maintain certain traditions. These traditions include the celebration of the Lord's day and the observance of the two Christian ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water and is the first public act of obedience symbolizing a believer's death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic commemoration through the partaking of the bread and cup, whereby all believers memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming.^{xiii}

The Government

The church and civil authority are ordained by God as separate institutions each with their own responsibilities, leadership and guiding principles. Christians are responsible to pray for, respect, and obey their government so long as the laws of the state are not in contradiction with the law of God. A Christian's worldview should always be based upon the truth and wisdom of scripture that applies to all areas of society. Thus, Christians should promote a biblical understanding and application of love, peace, justice, compassion and moral and civic virtue in the social order. While the church is called to be the salt and light of the world on social issues clearly defined in scripture, the church should not advocate for the promotion of political candidates or parties. Government must recognize the freedom of its citizens to live out their faith according to each person's individual beliefs. Thus, the state should never impede the free exercise of any religion nor impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind.^{xiv}

Q: What does God want me to do?

A: God wants me to live a Spirit filled life that brings Him honor and glory as I follow His will.

Since all Christians have repented from their former path of rebellion, they are called to walk in the Spirit of God. The Spirit's renewing work causes us to be distinctly set apart from the world as we exemplify the characteristics of the Holy Spirit's influence and live for the purpose of bringing glory to God in everything we do.^{xv}

The Spirit helps us to grow and mature in our faith by developing our understanding of God's word and strengthening our connection with the Father. While the Christian experience is designed for and most fully experienced in connection with the church, every believer is individually accountable to God and has direct access to Him.^{xvi}

The Holy Spirit helps us to know the original and unchanging meaning of God's word. There are foundational doctrines where the Holy Spirit has spoken clearly and consistently throughout the history of the Christian church. In those core principles the Holy Spirit will not lead us to an understanding that contradicts what He has previously revealed. Thus, while the meaning of scripture does not change, the Spirit guides us in applying the living word to individual circumstances.^{xvii}

The Holy Spirit allows us to have a constant connection to the Father in prayer even when we don't know what to say. Through prayer He speaks to us through comfort, encouragement, conviction, inner peace, and guidance. Prayer is a powerful and effective means for God to hear us, for His power to be unleashed and for our hearts to be conformed to His will.^{xviii}

The Holy Spirit connects us with the body of Christ as He leads us to unity, mutual accountability, encouragement and extending forgiveness to each other in the same way that God has forgiven us. He has also gifted us as individuals for the purpose of performing service for the kingdom of God. As we respond to the call to share the good news of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is always with us opening hearts, supplying the message, providing courage and helping us endure until the end.^{xix}

Q: What happens in the end?

A: In the end Jesus will return to bring judgment and redemption.

While it is our desire to live peaceful lives, all Christians of every age must be prepared to endure persecution. Until such time as humanity stands before the judgment seat of God, Christians must live expectantly with perseverance knowing that the testing of our faith is not in vain. As each of us strive to bring glory to God in every part of our lives, death is the moment where the work of our lives comes to fruition. Christians can face death with confidence as they pass through the door of this life into the next with the certain hope of being in the presence of God.^{xx}

According to the Father's plan and Christ's promise, Jesus will return in glory personally and visibly to bring justice, judgement and redemption to all of creation. At that time, Satan will be condemned, the dead will be raised, creation will be redeemed from the curse of sin, and humanity will be judged in righteousness. Those who rejected the grace of God will be condemned to total separation from God in Hell, the place of eternal punishment. Those who responded with faith in Christ will be glorified in their new bodies as they live in God's presence for all eternity. In a new Heaven and earth Christians will share in the reward of God's completed work of redemption where there will be no more death, sorrow or pain.^{xxi}

Appendix

Biblical References End Notes

God

ⁱ Jn. 4:24 (Spirit), Ps. 147:5 (Power), Ps. 135:6 (In Control), Deut. 6:4, Isa. 43:10 (One), Matt. 5:48 (Perfect), Mal. 3:6 (Unchanging), Ps. 34:8 (Good), 1 Jn. 4:8 (Loving), Deut. 32:4 (Just), 2 Sam. 24:14 (Merciful)

ⁱⁱ Matt. 28:19 (Triune), Lev. 19:2 (Holy), Ps. 22:28 (Ruler), Mk. 1:11 (Son of God), Jn. 1:2-3 (Son not created), John 10:30-33 (Son's divine nature), Eph. 2:7-8 (Humbled for Father's will), Matt. 1:18-25 (Born of virgin), Matt. 20:28 (Son of Man), 1 Peter 2:22 (Son sinless), Jn. 1:1-12 (Jesus Word), 1 Jn. 4:14 (Savior), 1 Cor. 6:19 (God within us)

Scripture

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Thes. 2:13, Heb. 4:12 (God's word), Jn. 17:17 (Truth), 2 Tim. 3:15-17 (Inspired), Matt. 24:35 (Unchanging), 1 Jn. 2:20-27 (True without error), Jn. 10:35 (Trustworthy), Ps. 119:105 (Guide), Eph. 4:4-6 (Unifies), Rom. 3:20 (Standard)

Creation

^{iv} Ps. 147:4-5 (God's knowledge), Eph. 1:11 (God's plan), Jn. 1:2-3, Col. 1:15-18, Acts 17:24 (Triune God created), Gen. 1:27 (Created male and female), Ps. 8:3-8 (Crown of creation), Gen. 9:6 (In God's image), Ps. 139:13-16 (Unique/Special), Rom. 1:18-23 (Moral awareness), Jn. 7:17 (Free to choose), Gen. 2:7 (Endowed soul), Jn. 17:3 (Spiritually connect to personal God), Acts 17:26-31 (All equal), Matt. 10:29-31 (Eternal value), Isa. 43:7 (Created for His glory), Acts 17:27 (Know God), Gen. 1:26,28 (Custodians of creation)

Sin

^v Ezek. 28, Isa. 14 (Satan rebelled), Jn. 8:44 (Satan's nature), Gen. 3:1-5 (Satan tempts), Rom. 5:18-21 (Adam Rebelled), Genesis 3:14-19; 4:1-15 (Creation cursed), Rom 1:18-25 (Nature of rebellion), Ps. 51:5 (Nature inherited), Rom. 6:23 (Sin leads to spiritual death), 1 Jn. 3:8 (Satan is evil), James 1:13-15, (Sinfulness of humanity), Rom. 8:20-21 (Curse of creation), Rom. 5:12 (Sin brings death), Rom. 1:26-32 (Sin brings evil), Rom. 2:9 (Sin brings suffering), Rom 1:20 (Without excuse), Rom. 3:10-26 (Humanity incapable), James 2:10 (Cannot please God), Rom. 3:11 (No one seeks God)

Salvation

^{vi} John 3:16-17 (God loved the world and sent his son), Gal. 1:4 (Plan of redemption), 1 Cor. 15:3 (Christ died for our sins), 2 Cor. 5:20-21 (Paid debt), Heb. 9:22 (Blood- just punishment), 1 Cor. 15:51-56 (Death defeated), 1 Cor. 15:13-20 (Resurrection- the proof), 1 Tim. 2:5 (Connection to God), Eph. 2:14-16 (Relationship reconciled)

^{vii} Jn. 14:6 (One way), Eph. 2:8-9 (Grace through faith), James 2:14 (saving Faith), Eph. 2:8-9 (Salvation gift), Jn. 3:16 (Believe in Jesus), Rom. 10:9-10 (Confess Lord), Acts 3:19 (Demonstrated by repentance), Eph 1:13 (Sealed), Phil. 1:6 (Confident in salvation), Phil. 2:12-13 (God's work of salvation)

Family

^{viii} Gen. 1:27-28 (God designed family), Matt. 19:3-6 (Family is foundation), Ps. 128:3, Matt. 18:5 (Family is by marriage, blood and adoption)

^{ix} Gen 2:24 (Marriage uniting man and woman), Prov. 5:15-20 (Marriage is exclusive), Mal. 2:14-16 (Marriage is commitment), Prov. 18:22 (Marriage is a blessing), Gen. 2:18 (Companionship), 1 Tim. 5:8, Proverbs 31:15-17 (Support), 1 Cor. 7:2-3 (Moral expression of sexuality), Gen. 1:28 (Procreation), Mark 10:6-9 (Intended to last lifetime), Titus 2:1-8 (Unique roles), Eph. 5:21 (Mutual submission), Col. 3:19 (Love), Eph. 5:22-33 (Marriage reflects Christ and Church)

x Ps. 139:14-15 (Creations of God from the womb), Ps. 127:3-5 (Children are blessing), Matt. 7:9-11 (Love children), Deu. 6:2-7 (Guide to maturity), Prov. 20:11 (Children instructed), Ex. 20:12 (Honor), Eph. 6:1 (Obey)

Church

^{xi} 1 Cor. 1:2 (Church is all believers), Matt. 5:14-16 (Light of the world), 2 Cor. 5:20-21 (Ambassadors of Christ), 1 Cor. 12:12-27 (Body of Christ), Rev. 19:7-9 (Bride of Christ is pure)

^{xii} Rom. 14:10-12, Rev. 2-3 (Church's individually accountable), Matt. 28:19-20 (United in mission), Rev. 7:9 (Gospel to all), 1 Tim. 3:1-13 (Offices of church), James 3:1 (Higher standard), 1 Tim. 5:19-21 (Leader's accountability), Titus 1:5-9 (Standards for leaders), 1 Peter 5:1-4 (Call to lead), Heb 13:17-18 (Support & submit to leaders)

^{xiii} 1 Cor. 11:2 (Keep those traditions), Heb. 10:24-25 (Don't forsake assembly), Mark 16:16 (Baptism for believers), Col. 2:12 (Baptism symbolizing death to self), 1 Peter 3:21-22 (Baptism symbolizing new life), 1 Cor. 11:23-26 (Lord's Supper memorializing death and return)

Government

^{xiv} Matt. 22:21 (Church and state separate), 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17 (Responsibility to government), Acts 5:27-29 (Obey God first), Matt. 5:13-16 (Salt and Light), Daniel 2:21 (God institutes rulers), Romans 13:1-7 (Government to promote good), Acts 4:19-20 (Free speech)

Christian Life

^{xv} Gal. 5:16-17 (Walk in the Spirit) Rom. 12:1-2 (Lives of worship), 1 Peter 1:10-19 (Holy as He is), Gal. 5:18-25 (Walk in righteousness), 1 Cor. 10:31 (All for God's glory)

^{xvi} 1 Cor. 3:1-17 (Maturing our faith), Rom. 14:1-10 (Soul Liberty)

^{xvii} 1 Cor. 2:12-14 (Spirit interpreted), 2 Peter 3:16 (Scripture interprets scripture), 2 Peter 1:19-21 (No private interpretation), Num. 23:19 (God doesn't change His mind), Ps. 119:105 (Word is our guide), John 14:26 (Spirit teaches us)

^{xviii} 1 Thes. 5:17 (Constant connection), Rom. 8:26-27 (Speaks for our hearts), 2 Cor. 1:4 (Comfort), Acts 9:31 (Encouragement), John 16:8 (Convict), Rom. 14:16-17 (Peace), Rom 8:14 (Guidance), James 5:16 (Powerful and effective), 1 John 5:14 (He hears), Mark 11:24 (Power unleashed), Phil. 2:13 (Conformed to His will)

^{xix} Eph. 4:1-6 (Spirit Unifies), Gal. 6:1-2 (Spiritual accountability), Acts 9:31 (Spirit encourages), Col. 3:12-13 (Forgive), 1 Cor. 12:12-31 (Body gifted), Matt. 28:19-20 (Spirit present in great commission)

The End

^{xx} 1 Tim. 2:2 (Desire to live in peace), 1 Peter 1:7, 4:12-19 (Expect persecution), Matt 24:36-37 (End in God's timing), Matt. 24:44 (Wait expectantly), Matt. 24:9-14 (Persevere until the end), James 1:2-3, 1 Cor. 15:58 (Not in vain), Phil 1:6 (Work completed), Phil 1:21 (Die is gain), Job 38:17 (Death is a door), 1 Thes. 4:16-17 (Hope secure), 2 Cor. 5:8 (Present with the Lord)

^{xxi} Mark 13:32 (Only Father knows), John 14:1-3 (Jesus' promise), Mark 13:26 (Return in glory), Matt. 24:29-31 (Personal/visible return), Acts 17:31, Acts 3:19-21 (Bringing justice, judgment and redemption), Rev. 20:10 (Satan defeated), Rev. 20:4-5, 12 (Dead raised), Rev. 22:1-3 (Creation redeemed), Rev. 20:11-15 (Humanity judged), Matt. 25:41-46 (Condemned to hell), Rom. 8:30 (Christians glorified), 1 Cor. 15:35-57 (New body), Rev. 21:5-7 (Eternity with God), Rev. 21:1-2 (New heaven and earth), Rev. 21:4 (No death, sorrow or pain)