

Mt Pleasant Church Statement of Beliefs

Article I. God

There is only one true, living God often referred to as “YHWH” (the LORD) in the Old Testament and “God” in the New Testament. He is the Creator of all things and in Him we live and move and have our being. He is the God of truth and without iniquity. He is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving. He is just and right and He will judge the world. God eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same worship, trust, and obedience. God is personal and has made himself known to man in various ways but ultimately through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Scriptures inspired and preserved by the Holy Spirit.

John 17:3, Genesis 1:1-31, Acts 17:28, Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 9:8, Mark 12:29, John 1, Acts 4:3-4, Psalms 103:19, Romans 11:36, Romans 8:15, Ephesians 1:3-6, Hebrews 12:5-9, John 14:8-9, 1 Timothy 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 16:14, Romans 8:37-39, Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Mark 13:11, John 14:26, John 16:13, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 6:19, John 16:8-11

I.01 God the Father

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity. As the absolute and highest Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save from sin all who trust in Him. He relates to His own as their good Father.

I.02 God the Son

The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God the Father, is the second Person of the Trinity. He is the full manifestation of God in the flesh. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is true God and true man. Christ died for our sins, fulfilling the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice for our 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. 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.

I.03 God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The Spirit's ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit draws the unredeemed to repentance and faith in Christ, and at salvation imparts new spiritual life to the believer, bringing the believer into union with Christ and the body of Christ, the universal Church. The Holy Spirit indwells, guides, instructs, comforts, fills, and empowers each believer for Godly living. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of God's righteousness and of coming judgment.

Article II. The Bible

The Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are inspired, breathed out by God, and inerrant in their original writings. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament are God's complete and sufficient revelation and therefore carry God's authority for the total well-being of humanity. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. We recognize no other voice as having authority in matters of faith and practice other than the Scriptures.

Psalm 119:97-104, Psalm 119:160, Matthew 5:18, John 5:46-47, John 10:35, 2 Timothy 3:15-16

Article III. Salvation

People are justly condemned being born into a state of sinfulness and on our own have no defense or excuse. Without exception, every man and every woman is totally depraved and desperately needs a Savior.

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person 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. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

At a time appointed by God, He effectually calls people from their life of sin. God extends grace to the unbeliever throughout their life while they are still dead in sins. This has been called prevenient grace or providence. His grace calls them by His word and His Spirit from their natural state of spiritual death and enmity with him to a state of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds with a saving understanding of spiritual truth, leading to repentance of their sins and a desire to follow Him.

Those who are called are also justified by the blood of Christ. No merit, work or favor of the person is considered by God, it is by grace we are saved, through faith in Christ alone. By justification the believer is given the judicial satisfaction earned by Christ by His substitutionary atonement for the believer's sin. In exchange, the believer receives the righteousness earned by Christ as their own and are now a new spiritual creation.

God adopts the justified as His children who enjoy privileges unique to being called the children of God in that they can boldly approach the throne of His grace and cry to him "Abba, father". They are protected, provided for, loved and disciplined by God as a father. However, they are never cast off, as they are heirs of everlasting salvation.

After the believer's justification, they enter into a life of sanctification. 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.

Those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, who honestly love him and try to walk in good conscience before him, may in this life be assured with certainty that they are in a state of grace. They may also rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and they will never be ashamed of that hope.

The assurance true believers have of their salvation may be shaken, lessened, or interrupted for various reasons: from neglecting to preserve it; from committing some particular sin, which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; from some sudden or strong temptation; or from God's withdrawing the sense of His presence and allowing them to walk in darkness. Nevertheless, they are never completely without God's seed, the life of faith, the love of Christ and of other believers, and the sincere heart and obedient conscience, out of which the Spirit may revive this assurance in due time and by which they are in the meantime kept from complete despair.

Those whom God has accepted in His Son and has effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit can never completely or finally fall out of their state of grace. Rather, they shall definitely continue in that state to the end and are eternally saved.

Genesis 3:1-6, John 8:24, Romans 1:18-20, Romans 1:32, Romans 3:10-19, Romans 5:12,

1 John 2, 1 John 3, 1 John 5:13, 2 Timothy 1:12, Romans 5:2, Romans 5:5, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Hebrews 6:11-19, 2 Peter 1:4-5.

Psalms 51:8-14, Ephesians 4:11-31, Psalms 77:1-10, Matthew 26:69-72, Psalms 31:22, Psalms 88, Isaiah 50:10, 1 John 3:9, Luke 22:32, Job 13:15, Micah 7:7-9, Isaiah 54:7-10, Psalms 22, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, Acts 3:19.

2 Peter 1:4-11, 2 Corinthians 1:12. Romans 8, Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 1 John 5:13, Isaiah 50:10, Mark 9:24, Psalms 77:1-20, Psalms 73, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 1 John 4:13, Hebrews 6:11-12, Ephesians 3:17-19, Romans 5:1-5, Romans 14:17, Romans 15:13, Ephesians 1:3-4, Psalms 4:6-7, Psalms 119:32, Romans 6:1-2, Titus 2:11-14, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Psalms 130:4, 1 John 1:6-7

Philippians 1:6, 2 Peter 1:10, John 10:28-29, 1 John 3:9, 1 Peter 1:5,9, Jeremiah 32:40.

Article IV. Heaven, Hell, and the Return of Christ

After death the redeemed go to be with the Lord in paradise, while the unredeemed go to a place of torment. In these respective places, the spirits of the dead await the final bodily resurrection and judgment.

God the Father has ordained a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom He has given all power and judgment. In that day not only will the apostate angels be judged, but all the people who have lived on earth will appear before the court of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, words, and actions, and be judged according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

God's purpose in arranging for this day is to show forth the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect and the glory of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. At that time the righteous will go into

everlasting life and receive that fullness of joy and refreshment which will come from the presence of the Lord which is called Heaven. But the wicked, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be thrown into eternal conscious torment and punished away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power, which is called Hell.

Christ wants us to be completely convinced that there is going to be a day of judgment, as a deterrent to sin for everyone and as an added consolation for the godly in their suffering. He has also made sure that no one knows when that day will be, so that we may never rest secure in our worldly surroundings, but, not knowing what hour the Lord will come, we must always be alert and may always be ready to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

Acts 17:31, Matthew 25:31-34. John 5:22-27, 1 Corinthians 6:3, Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, Ecclesiastes 12:14, Romans 2:16, Romans 14:10-12, Matthew 12:36-37, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Romans 9:22-23, Matthew 25, Ephesians 2:4-7, Luke 16:19-31, Romans 2:5-6, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9, Psalms 16:11, Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:47-48, 2 Peter 3:9-14, Luke 21:27-28, Romans 8:23-25. Matthew 24:36-44, Mark 13:35-37, Luke 12:35-36, Revelation 22:20.

Article V. The Church

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer becomes part of His body, which is the one universal church, composed of all those throughout the world who trust Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures call believers to gather in local assemblies to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of ordinances (baptism and communion) and fellowship. Each of us, as part of this gathering of believers, is also called to develop and use our talents and gifts given by the Holy Spirit, to build up the church, to share the message of the gospel and to accomplish God's Kingdom purposes in the world.

Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. The church's members are to work together in love and unity, under the oversight of elders and other supportive leadership, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ.

The good news of Christ is for everyone, so we commit ourselves to ongoing ministry outside of the church, seeking to share the gospel and make disciples in our community and around the world. Christ calls us to love our neighbors, so we respond through actively seeking ways to serve and care for those who are in need in our community and beyond.

Ephesians 5:23, Romans 12:1, Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 10:23-25, Ephesians 4:15-16, Matthew 25:35-40, Mark 12:30-31.

Article VI. Humanity

All humanity is created in the image of God and possesses intrinsic dignity and worth.

God made humanity— Adam and Eve, the first man and woman—in His own image. Set apart as His image bearers, every human being is sacred. All men and all women, bearing the image of God, are meant to represent God in His creation. God made humanity male and female, by His sovereign choice at their conception. God alone has the authority to make humanity male and female, humans are not given this right, thus maleness or femaleness at birth is understood to be God’s sovereign choice for that person. Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value but are distinct by divine design.

God declares the created order to be very good, distinguishing men and women as His agents to care for, manage and govern over it. As part of God’s good created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church. As it relates to the church, men and women are both expected to lead; however, the office of elder is reserved for qualified men.

Adam and Eve were innocent under God’s law, but by their voluntary transgression they fell from this sinless and joyful state, bringing death and condemnation into the world. Consequently, all people are sinners not only by our own choice, but by inheritance.

Genesis 1:27-30, Genesis 2:18-25, Job 10:10-12, Psalm 139:14, Luke 1:31-44, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1

Article VII. Marriage and Family

Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union in the covenant of marriage that establishes the only God-ordained pattern of sexual relations for men and women. In God’s wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. Marriage was designed and instituted by God to be the permanent, monogamous union of a man and a woman, representing the mystery of the union of Jesus Christ and His church. The man and woman are meant to live under the authority of God in the one-flesh union, living in mutual love and respect, with the man being charged as the head of his household.

It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by the death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows; yet only in cases of extreme, unrepented-of, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. Such separation or divorce is accepted as permissible only because of the failure of one or both of the partners and does not lessen in any way the divine intention for indissoluble union.

Children, from the moment of conception are fearfully and wonderfully made for God’s sovereign purposes and are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God’s pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to

honor and obey their parents. And likewise parents are not to provoke their children to the point of wrath.

Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 5:31-32, Mark 10:2-9, Romans 7:2-3, 1 Corinthians 7:1-15, 39, Ephesians 5:28-33, Matthew 19:4-9, 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, Mark 10:4-9, 1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 1 Corinthians 7:15, Matthew 19:3-9, Job 10:10-12, Psalm 139:14.

Article VIII. Baptism

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. By baptism a person is solemnly admitted into the visible church. Baptism is also a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of the believer's engrafting into Christ, of rebirth, of remission of sins, and of the believer's yielding to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. By Christ's own direction this sacrament is to be continued in His church until the end of the world. The sacrament of baptism does not accomplish salvation but is an outward sign of an inward work of the Holy Spirit.

The physical substance to be used in this sacrament is water. The person is to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Dipping the person into the water is not necessary nor is it forbidden. Baptism is correctly administered by immersion, pouring or sprinkling water on the person.

Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:16, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27-29, Acts 2:38-41, Acts 10:47, Colossians 2:11-12, Romans 6:3-5, Titus 3:5, Mark 1:4-5, Acts 22:16, Matthew 3:11, John 1:33, Acts 8:36-39, Ephesians 4:11-13, Hebrews 9:9-10, Acts 16:33, Mark 7:4-15, Acts 1:5, Acts 11:15-16, Acts 10:46-47.

Article IX. The Lord's Supper

The night Jesus was betrayed He instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His church until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of His sacrifice in death and of the seal of all the benefits of that sacrifice for true believers. The Lord's Supper should be celebrated routinely, in a manner that is consistent with the holy nature of the remembrance.

In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor is any actual sacrifice made for the remission of sins of the living or the dead. Rather, this sacrament commemorates Christ's offering up of himself, by himself, on the cross once for all, and it spiritually offers up to God every possible praise for that sacrifice.

In the administration of the Lord's Supper, Jesus has directed His ministers to declare to the congregation His words instituting this sacrament, to pray, and to bless the bread and juice, which are thus set apart from their ordinary use and put to holy use.

The bread and juice in this sacrament, properly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, so relate to him crucified that truly and yet only sacramentally they are sometimes called by the name of what they represent, that is, the body and blood of Christ. Even so, they still remain in substance and nature only bread and wine, as they were before their sacramental use.

Mt. Pleasant believes that the Lord's Supper may be celebrated by anyone who repents of their sins and earnestly seeks to live their life in submission to Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28, 1 Corinthians 10:16-21, Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 22:19-20, Hebrews 9:22-28, Hebrews 7:23-27, Hebrews 10:11-18, Mark 14:22-24, 1 Corinthians 11:20-27.

Article X. Creation

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to create the world out of nothing in order to reveal the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. He made everything in the world, visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and it was very good. After God had made all the other creatures, He created man, male and female, unique from the animals with reasoning and immortal souls.

Hebrews 1:2, John 1:2-3, Genesis 1:1-3, Job 26:7-13, Job 33:4, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Romans 1:20, Jeremiah 10:12, Psalms 104:24, Psalms 33:5-6, Hebrews 11:3, Colossians 1:16-18, Acts 17:24, Exodus 20:11, Genesis 1:27.

Article XI. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11, Matthew 12:1-12, Mark 2:27-28, Mark 16:1-7, Luke 24:1-3, John 4:21-24, John 20:1, Acts 20:7, Romans 14:5-10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Colossians 2:16, Revelation 1:10.

Article XII. Providence

God, who created everything, also upholds everything. He directs, regulates, and governs every creature, action, and thing, from the greatest to the least, by His completely wise and holy providence. He does so in accordance with His infallible foreknowledge and the voluntary, unchangeable purpose of His own will. This is all done to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Hebrews 1:3, Daniel 4:34-35, Psalms 135:6, Acts 17:25-28, Job 38-41, Matthew 10:29-31, Matthew 6:26,30, Nehemiah 9:6, Proverbs 15:3, Proverbs 16:1, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalms 104:24, Psalms 145:7,17, Acts 15:15-18, Psalms 94:8-11, Ephesians 1:11-12, Psalms 33:10-11, Isaiah 63:14, Ephesians 3:10-11, Romans 9:17-18, Genesis 45:7, Genesis 50:20, Acts 2:23, Jeremiah 32:19, Genesis 8:22, Jeremiah 31:35, Acts 27:24-44, Isaiah 55:10-11, 2 Kings 6:6, Daniel 3:27, 1 Kings 18:17-39, Job 34:10.

Article XIII. Civil Authorities

God, the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, has ordained civil authorities to be over people under Him for His own glory and the public good. God causes kingdoms to

rise and fall based on His sovereign will, and at times uses civil authorities as an instrument of judgment.

Civil authorities may at times direct laws and policy which run counter to the clear teaching of Scripture. At these times, the church must follow God's law insofar as it requires obedience to Him. If the laws of the land are contrary to the commands, directions and examples given for holy living in the Scriptures, it is the believer's responsibility to stay true to God's commands even if it violates laws set by civil authorities.

It is the believer's duty to pray for those in authority, to honor them, to pay them taxes and whatever is owed them, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to them for conscience's sake.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute offices of civil authority when that is their calling. In the administration of such offices they should take care to support true religion, justice, and peace, according to the beneficial laws of each government, and in so doing they may lawfully under the New Testament wage war on just and necessary occasions.

Romans 13:1-7, Proverbs 21:1, Proverbs 8:15-16, Psalms 2:10-12, 1 Timothy 2:1-3, Psalms 82:1-4, Matthew 8:9-10, Acts 10:1-2, Matthew 16:19, 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, Ephesians 4:11-12, John 18:36, Acts 5:29, Ezra 7:23-28, Acts 18:14-16, 2 Samuel 23:3, 1 Peter 2:17, Matthew 22:21, Titus 3:1, Acts 25:9-11, 1 Peter 2:10-16.

Article XIV. Non-Essentials

We believe that there are matters of conscience relating to aspects of the Christian life that are non-essential to salvation and sanctification. Christian liberty is to prevail in matters not expressly forbidden or commanded in Scriptures. Things may be permitted but may not be edifying to the body. We believe it is our duty to extend grace to weaker brothers while instructing and training in righteousness, administering truth with love.

Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, Ephesians 4:15