

## The Vine Church Statement of Faith

**The Vine Church seeks to simply have the authentic faith we see Jesus' followers embrace in the Bible. In Acts 2:42 we read about the newly baptized believers in Jesus:** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Following is a summary statement of our faith. We believe it is what the Bible teaches and what authentic followers of Jesus have always believed.

**We believe there is only one true God.** (Deut 6:4) He has existed forever in three persons. (Gen 1:26; Mat 3:16-17; Mat 28:19)

**We believe God the Father is the Creator and sustainer of the universe.** The universe, the earth, and each and every one of us are the creation of our infinitely wise and loving God.

**We believe man and all creation fell from an original state of perfection into sin and brokenness.** We believe God made mankind and all his creation "very good." Mankind who was given free will chose to disobey God instead of loving and trusting him in relationship. When mankind disobeyed God their natures became utterly inclined to sin and rebellion against God and their actions continually offended God's holiness and betrayed the selfishness and pride in their hearts. Without God's salvation mankind as a descendant of Adam and Eve is born separated from God by sin and destined for eternal death and damnation.

**We believe God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save us from the consequence of sin, death, and eternal damnation.** Jesus Christ is God in the flesh—He is the 100% human son of Mary. He is also 100% God conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. After living a perfect sinless life and proving by his miracles he is the Son of God, he allowed Himself to be crucified on a cross, paying the price for the sin of the world. Jesus' physical resurrection from the dead three days after he died fulfills God's promises in Scripture and testifies to the fact that God the Father has accepted his beloved Son's sacrifice for sin as payment in full for the sin of all humanity. God promises that whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life.

**We believe in the Resurrection of the Body, the Judgment of all, and the Eternal Life of the World to come.** The Bible teaches Jesus will come again for the judgment of all who have ever lived. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned to eternal punishment and separation from God in hell with the devil and his angels. God promises that he will make a physical new creation for the saved. It will be paradise restored. Jesus will reunite our souls with a transformed physical and glorious body like his own. We will live with god in paradise and there will be no crying, tears, pain, or death in this place. We will live physical lives in perfect harmony and love with all those who believe. The believers who make up the community of The Vine Church live for this eternal reality. We realize our lives on this earth are but a

moment so we live lives of eternal significance - joyfully offering our lives to God and our neighbor in loving gratitude for all God has done. We long and work for everyone to be with us in heaven. We don't want anyone to go to hell.

**We believe the Holy Spirit works through God's Word to bring us back into a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus.** We believe God's Word is powerful. Through the Word God created the world. Through the Word of the Gospel the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith in the believer. We do not believe that God simply "zaps" faith into the human heart. We believe God has chosen to use the Word as the vehicle through which he converts the human heart from unbelief to belief. Through the spoken Good News about Jesus a person who is spiritually dead is awakened and "born again."

**We believe in a Spirit filled living relationship with Jesus Christ.** The Holy Spirit brings us to saving faith in Jesus through the powerful Gospel Word but he doesn't stop there. He dwells within the born again believer in Christ. In harmony with the Word the Holy Spirit is constantly reminding us of what Jesus has said and done and who we are as believers. The Holy Spirit is constantly strengthening us so that we can grow in maturity - becoming more and more like our loving and saving Savior who came to serve and seek and save what was lost.

**We believe in the Holy Christian Church throughout all the earth.** We believe the church is not a building it is a people. All those who stand upon the Gospel of Jesus life, death, and resurrection and believe that he is their Savior and Lord make up the Holy Christian Church. Only God really knows what is in the human heart. The Holy Christian Church will ultimately be known to all on judgment day.

**We believe that Lord has established the local congregation of believers to Shepherd and care for believers and reach out together with the Gospel.** From everything we read in Scripture we see that those genuine believers who make up the invisible Holy Christian Church gather visibly on earth to hear the Shepherd's voice and receive his care. Genuine believers know they need physical accountability and support and want to fulfill Jesus' command: "Love one another as I have loved you." Genuine believers seek to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things he commanded." Genuine believers are humble in the mission and know we are better together than alone.

**We believe this gathering of believers in a local congregation is Jesus' plan for caring for his sheep - not mans.** In order to Shepherd and care for believers and reach out with Gospel to the ends of the earth the Lord has established the local church. In Ephesians 4:11-13 we read: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to

be pastors and teachers, [12] to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up [13] until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." The Vine Church believes authentic followers of Jesus will seek to be part of a local community of faith. In Acts 2:42ff we read that the believers did life together. Specifically, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."(Acts 2:42) As an authentic Christ following community we believe we must do the same thing. We must preach the Gospel and call people to repentance and faith in Jesus. We must baptize and be devoted to the Word of the Apostles so that the baptized learn to follow Jesus and make disciples. We must live in community and love one another as Christ has loved us. We must be devoted to the Breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper. We must live in complete dependence upon God as a Praying Church.

**We believe Bible is the authority when it comes to knowledge about God and His forgiveness.** We can discover things about God by observing the beauty of creation or the orderly nature of the human body. We are also directed toward the truth we are created in the image of a Holy God because we have a conscience that convicts us of right and wrong. But natural knowledge of God does not reveal to us the details of who God is and what he has done and still does for our salvation. God has been gracious to us and given us a miraculous gift in the Bible. We believe the Bible is God's truth, therefore, it is powerful and free from errors. We stand upon the Scripture that tells us: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, [17] so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) The Word of God, and not tradition or human reason, shall have utmost authority in our church. Where the Word speaks we are bound. Where the Word does not speak we have freedom. (2 Peter 1:16-21; Isaiah 55:10-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 14:1,4,12,22)

**We believe God has given His Church two great gifts in Baptism and The Lord's Supper.** Part of being an Acts 2:42 church is celebrating God's gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Believers have always celebrated these gifts. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are often referred to as the Sacraments. The word Sacrament is a Latin word for the Greek word Mystery. It is the word used in 1 Corinthians 4:1 NLT. Paul says, "So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's *mysteria* (*sacraments*)." At The Vine Church we joyfully embrace "God's mysteries" and live in simple obedience to God's Word.

**As we look at the many passages related to Baptism in Scripture** we see that it is a wonderful gift by which God connects his creative Gospel Word with the physical element of water to establish and seal a relationship with us. By this gift he gives assurance that we are members of His Family and promises to always be our God. We believe baptism is a powerful faith creating gift. We

joyfully receive Christ's command to baptize in Matthew 28:19 with obedience and faith and we celebrate baptism by immersion or sprinkling. We baptize all ages: adults, children, and infants. We would love to pour over the Scriptures and apostolic history with you and discuss this Biblical and historical view of baptism more fully.

**In the Lord's Supper**, we believe our Lord Jesus is present with his love, forgiveness, and power for living just as he promised. When Jesus promises that "this (bread) is my body...this (wine) is my blood," we believe it! We do not understand how this is, and do not have to, but we believe that while the Supper is a simple act consisting of bread and wine and involving all of our senses, the Word of God ensures that Jesus' body and blood are also present, in and with the bread and wine, for the strengthening of our relationship with Him. Again, at The Vine Church we joyfully embrace the mystery of this Sacrament and live in simple obedience to God's Word. We can't overemphasize how much we would love to dig into the Word with you to study the supernatural way that God touches us through gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

**We believe this statement of faith is a summary the Biblical and historical faith of Christ followers.** It is what the people The Vine Church believe. It is only a summary. All the details in this statement of faith are based on the Word of God but we acknowledge that what is revealed in Word of God much more glorious and much greater than this summary. The life of an authentic follower of Christ is marked by constant learning. The word "disciple" means Learner and we invite you to join us in a journey of "learning" as we sit at Jesus feet together and seek to really hear his Word and do it.