



## TEACHING POSITION

As the Elders of RiverLakes Community Church, we believe Scripture entrusts us with the solemn responsibility of overseeing and guarding the doctrine of the church (Tit. 1:9). One of the ways we endeavor to do this is through the establishment of this teaching position.

All the positions affirmed here are well within the boundaries of Evangelical orthodoxy, while allowing for theological freedom on some of the finer points of doctrine. Our hope is that this document serves both as a teaching device as well as a correcting tool, so that our body is continually comforted and challenged by the sound teaching of God's Word.

Every teacher or person in leadership at RiverLakes Community Church is expected to be willing to affirm this teaching position as part of his or her responsibility, and must be open to the input of the elders should he or she deviate from these positions in any significant way. We know that the church is built up when she is nourished by the great truths of the Gospel, and it is our sincere desire "to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).

### CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that God has revealed himself and his truth by both general and special revelation. General revelation displays his existence, power, providence, moral standard, patience, goodness, and glory; special revelation manifests his triune nature and his program of redemption through Messiah for humanity. This special revelation has been given in various ways, preeminently in the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, and in the inscripturated Word of God, the Bible. We affirm that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the written Word of God given by the Holy Spirit and are the complete and final canonical revelation of God for this age.

*(Rom. 1:18—2:4; 2:14-16; Ps. 19; Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31; Jn. 1:1-18; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12)*

These books were written by a process of inspiration, a dual authorship in which the Holy Spirit so moved the human authors that, through their individual personalities and styles, they composed and recorded God's Word which is inerrant (without error) in the original writings. These books, constituting the written Word of God, convey objective truth and are the believer's only infallible authority for faith and practice.

*(2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-20; Jn. 10:35; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13)*

The meaning of Scripture lies in the canonical text and is that which God intended to convey through the human authors. An interpreter discovers this meaning through careful application of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation of a text in its context, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in the community of Christ. The Holy Spirit illumines the text, enabling the reader to embrace that which God has communicated and to see the glory of Christ in the Word of God. *(Jn. 7:17; 16:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 2:20)*

### CONCERNING GOD

#### **The Triune God**

We believe there is only one true God who describes himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, full of loving kindness and faithfulness; who forgives sin but does not leave the guilty unpunished. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, faithfulness, love, and truth. He is absolutely separate, exalted above the world as its creator, yet everywhere present and involved in the world as the sustainer of all things. This God is one in essence, who is eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each equal in nature and attributes and equally worthy of worship, trust, and obedience. *(Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 100:5; 139:8; Isa. 45:5-7; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 10:18; Jn. 4:24; Acts 17:24, 29; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:6)*

## God the Father

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, decrees and works all things according to his own purpose and for his own glory, being sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. He created the universe out of nothing. He continually sustains, directs and governs all creatures and events, accomplishing this without being the author or approver of sin nor minimizing human responsibility. He has graciously chosen the elect from all eternity, he saves from sin all who come to him through Jesus Christ, and he personally relates to his children as their Father. (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Chr. 29:11; Ps. 103:19; Jn. 1:18, 6:40; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 4:13; James 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:17)

## God the Son

Jesus Christ is the incarnation (God in human flesh) of the eternal second person of the Trinity. He is the Son of God and the virgin-born Son of Man. He came as the God-Man to reveal God, redeem human beings, and will as Messiah rule over God's kingdom. (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jn. 1:1, 3, 18, 29; 10:36; 1 Jn. 1:3)

In the incarnation he is both fully God and fully human without sin, possessing two natures in one person. By his obedient life, miraculous ministry, and substitutionary death, he brings salvation to humanity. He rose bodily from the dead on the third day, the resurrection confirming the Father's acceptance of his atoning work on the cross, providing the basis for new life in Christ now and bringing a future resurrection unto life for all believers. He ascended into heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand, and he now performs the intercessory aspect of his high priestly work for believers. (Jn. 1:14, 29; 5:21-29; Rom. 3:24-26; 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:5-6; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3; 4:15; 7:26; 10:5-10; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10)

Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity, the head of his Body the Church, the coming Messiah and king, and the final judge of both believers and unbelievers.

(Isa. 53:10; Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 5:27-29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; Rev. 20:11-15)

## God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the eternal third person of the Trinity, is active in creation, the incarnation, the writing of Scripture, and the work of salvation. (Gen. 1:2; Matt. 1:18; Jn. 3:5-7; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

Coming from the Father and the Son at Pentecost, he initiated the Church. He convicts unbelievers of sin. He indwells all believers, regenerating them, intercedes for them, and exercises his ministries of sealing, sanctification, instructing, transforming into the likeness of Christ, and empowering for service. He gives spiritual gifts which are to be used according to biblical guidelines to build up the Church and to glorify Christ. He is the agent of Spirit baptism which incorporates believers into the Church at their conversion.

(Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:13; 2:22)

## CONCERNING ANGELS

We believe angels are created as personal spirits who worship and glorify God, serve him, and minister to human beings. Although all angels were originally created holy by God, some followed the prideful lead of Satan and fell from their position. These fallen angels, also known as demons, attempt to subvert the work of God through such strategies as temptation, accusation, and deception.

(Ps. 148:2; Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 2:10-11; 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12, 16; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:9-10)

## CONCERNING HUMANITY AND SIN

We believe God created the first humans, Adam and Eve, in his image, mandating a pattern for marriage and sexuality. Biblical marriage is a lifelong covenant between one biological male and one biological female, and sex is a uniting act reserved for that covenant relationship.<sup>1</sup> God established them and all humanity as persons with dignity regardless of race or ethnicity<sup>2</sup> from the time of conception to natural death, with the intention that they should glorify God, enjoy his fellowship, and fulfill his purpose on the earth. Created with integrity and without sin, our first parents fell into sin by disobeying the will of God. As a result of the sin inherited from Adam and individual acts of sinning the human race is dead in sin, separated from God and subject to his wrath. While all people bear the image of God, they are inherently sinful and hopelessly lost apart from divine grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 1:8)

<sup>1</sup>See Nashville Statement (<https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement/>)

<sup>2</sup>See Dallas Statement (<https://statementonsocialjustice.com>)

## **CONCERNING SALVATION**

We believe that the death of Jesus on the cross is the perfect sacrifice for sin. His substitutionary work satisfied divine justice and is the propitiation of the wrath of God, being sufficient for the sins of the whole world.

(Isa. 53:1-12; Jn. 10:27-29; Rom. 3:24; 5:8-9; 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Jn. 4:10)

Through his death and resurrection, we are redeemed from sin, reconciled to God, justified by grace alone through faith alone, adopted into the family of God, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is appropriated by personal conversion, consisting of repentance from sin and trust in God's provision in Christ, resulting in full forgiveness of sin and new life with Christ. (Jn. 1:12; 3:5, 7, 16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 8:1-4, 29-30; 10:8-13; Eph. 1:4-5; 2:8-10; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Heb. 11:6)

Believers are commanded to pursue sanctification, to grow in Christ-likeness as they keep in step with the Holy Spirit and live in obedience to the Word of God. They are kept by the power of God through faith and will persevere to the end, culminating in their glorification at Christ's coming. (Jn. 5:24; 10:28; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 2:10; 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:3-10; 1 Jn. 3:2-3)

## **CONCERNING THE CHURCH**

The Church is the people of God, initiated at Pentecost and completed at the return of Christ who is its head. The mission of the Church is to glorify God by worshiping corporately, building itself up as a loving, faithful community by instruction of the Word, submitting to the lead of the Holy Spirit, equipping the saints for ministry, observing the biblical sacraments, communicating the gospel and making disciples of all peoples. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:4-5; 11:15; 2:46-47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 12:4-21; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:4-6; 4:12; 5:25-27; Col. 1:18; Rev. 5:9)

Believers should gather together in local assemblies. They are priests before God and to one another, responsible to serve God and minister to each other. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and leading the assembly are qualified, male elders and people who serve in the role of deacons. Although church and state are distinct institutions, believers are to submit to the government within the limits of God's Word. (Matt. 18:15-18; 22:15-22; 28:19; Acts 2:41-42; 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 14:40; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:12-14; 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:25; 1 Pet. 2:5-10, 13-17; 5:1-5)

Two ordinances have been committed to the local church and are to be administered to believers. Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a biblically ordained profession of personal faith, portraying death to sin and resurrection to new life. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ in remembrance of him. This portrays his death, unites believers in fellowship, and anticipates their participation in the marriage supper of the Lamb. These two ordinances are to be observed until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:16-20; Lk. 22:19-20; Acts 2:41; 10:47-48; Rom. 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 11:23-29)

## **CONCERNING LAST THINGS**

We believe that at death, the spirits of believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ and there remain in joyful fellowship awaiting their bodily resurrection. The spirits of unbelievers are in misery and torment as punishment for sin awaiting their bodily resurrection. (Dan. 12:2;

Lk. 16:22-23; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-26; 3:10-11, 21; Rev. 20:11-15)

This age will culminate in the rapture of believers and the tribulation, followed by the return of Christ in glory with his saints to the earth to destroy his enemies, to restore Israel, to initiate the millennium, and to reign over the cosmos as Lord and Messiah. (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:1-16; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:22-38; 37:21-28; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Jn. 14:2-3; Acts 1:4-8; Rom. 11:25-27; 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 15:51-53; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Tit. 2:11-13; Rev. 3:10; 16:1-21; 19:1-21; 20:1-6)

At the close of Messiah's millennial reign the devil, his demons, and the unbelieving dead will be judged and committed to eternal conscious punishment in hell. God will create a new heaven and new earth where all his people will dwell eternally in his presence, giving worship and service to him to whom belongs all glory. (Matt. 25:31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-4; 22:5, 11)



## TEACHING POSITION

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the RCC Teaching Position, and as a leader and/or teacher within RCC, agree to teach the Word of God in any and all settings within the theological framework established in this document. Should I ever be in question about whether a position I am going to teach comports with the RCC position as stated, I will reach out to my ministry supervisor before proceeding to ensure that my instruction is in alignment with the major doctrines of the church. I understand that the goal in doing so is to promote sound doctrine and unity within the Body of Christ (Tit. 2:1; Eph. 4:1-3).

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