

NORTHSIDE CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH

We affirm classical Wesleyan doctrine and the historic faith, which the church has used to define the parameters of Christian teaching.

Northside Church affirms the following doctrinal standards:

Traditional Apostle Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy *catholic church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*catholic – universal church

In line with the teaching of Holy Scripture, we believe:

1. Nature of God

Trinity – God is three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is distinct, yet the Three are One. We worship one God.

Father – Jesus reveals to us God as Father, and He invites us to come to God through the relationship of Father and Child.

Jesus Christ – Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father. He is not made. He is one with the Father. Jesus is the incarnation of God on earth. He is fully human and fully divine.

Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit lives within those who trust and follow Jesus, and the Spirit makes us one with

God. The Holy Spirit guides us, teaches us, convicts us of sin, and empowers us to follow God in loving obedience.

2. Salvation

Grace—God’s grace enables us to trust and believe in Jesus Christ for Salvation. This grace also enables us to follow Jesus. It frees us from the power of sin. Grace is forgiveness, but it is also God’s blessing and transformation in our lives. We can do nothing to earn this grace.

John Wesley, described God’s grace as threefold:

- *Prevenient grace* – the grace that causes our first thoughts of God and draws us to God.
- *Justifying grace* – the grace from God that is willing to accept us and forgive us, just as if we had never sinned.
- *Sanctifying grace* – the grace that continues to nurture us and increase our knowledge so we can more fully love God and our neighbor. We are committed to “go on to perfection” by having a heart habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor and by having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked.

Atonement—Atonement is the work that is done for us by Jesus Christ. Through the life, death by crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are given the gift of right relationship with God. Jesus suffered the punishment for sin, cleansing us and freeing us from the power of sin. When we receive the gift through grace, we are made one with God.

Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ—Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The work of Jesus is the only work that is able to both forgive us of our sinful actions and to free us from the power of sin in us. When we repent of our sins and believe this truth and trust Jesus to save us, we are justified and made right with God based on Jesus’ holiness and sacrifice.

3. The Bible

The Bible is God’s Word, given to us to offer truth and to guide us in life. We believe the Holy Bible, made up of sixty (66) books, (39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament), reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for

our salvation. The Bible is inspired by God and the truth of God contained within it is infallible. It is our final authority in all matters of faith, practice, and living. It contains all things necessary for us to understand and receive the gift of salvation from God by faith in Jesus Christ.

4. **Humanity**

Image of God—Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that humans are created in the image of God. We reflect the nature of God, and we are given a spirit by which we can be joined to God through the Holy Spirit.

Sacred Worth—All persons have inherent worth because all persons are made by God in His image. worth comes from our creator rather than any accomplishments in life. Life is a gift from God, and that life (bearing the image of God and worth from the creator) begins at conception.

Fallen into Power of Sin—All human life extends from the first life that God created. The first humans rebelled against God and submitted the human race to the power of sin. All persons are born into sin, called inherited sin. We are broken and prone toward selfishness and rebellion against God. We are all guilty and have fallen short of God's holy standard. All persons are in complete need of God's forgiveness and grace to be free of sin's hold on our lives.

Unable to Save Ourselves but Able to Surrender to God's Grace—While we are unable to live righteous and holy lives without God's grace at work in our lives, we are able to surrender and receive the free gift of grace that God offers through Jesus Christ. We are given free will to reject God or to receive His gift. God pursues us first in His grace.

5. **Marriage, Singleness and Sexuality**

Marriage – The Bible affirms marriage, and we believe marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God. We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single exclusive union.

Singleness – The Bible affirms singleness in life. In the Wesleyan tradition, we believe the ability to live the single life is given by God as a good gift. Holiness is found in singleness and through marriage. Jesus and the Apostle Paul lived single lives, though within the context of relationship with others.

Singleness is not loneliness or to be lived alone, but in relationship with other believers.

Sexuality – We believe that God intends for His children to practice sexual purity, faithfulness in marriage, and celibacy in singleness. We believe any sexual expression outside of these standards is incompatible with the teaching of the Bible.

6. The Christian Life

Means of Grace—God gives us certain means of grace that allow us to open ourselves to God’s gracious work of transformation both in us and through us for the world. These means of grace include, prayer, fasting, caring for others, worship, and two sacraments ordained by Christ Jesus, Baptism and Holy Communion.

Priesthood of All Believers—All who trust and follow Jesus are filled with the Holy Spirit, joined in oneness with God through Jesus Christ, and called into a life of ministry. Some are called specifically to lead the church through full time ministry, but all believers carry the responsibility to be witnesses daily of God’s work in the world through Jesus Christ.

7. Sacraments

Baptism—Baptism is an outward sign of God’s grace at work in our lives. It is a sign of the cleansing power of God’s grace for all who trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. We are commanded to go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are initiated into Christ’s holy church. We are incorporated into God’s mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit.

Northside Church utilizes the methods of pouring, sprinkling and immersion in baptism. We believe in baptizing people of all ages (infants, children, youth, and adults), and believe you only need to be baptized once. If you have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we accept your baptism and do not require you to repeat it.

Holy Communion—Holy Communion was initiated by Christ at the last supper. In Holy Communion we remember the sacrifice of Jesus in giving of his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. As we gather in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice, God is made spiritually present to us through the elements of bread and wine by the power of the Holy Spirit, and God ministers to us in order to build our faith and to make us one with Him, and to bring us unity with one another. All who love Christ and earnestly repent of their sins are invited to participate in Holy Communion, regardless of age or church membership.

8. The Church

Hope of the World—Jesus Christ is the hope of the world, and we believe that the local church is the venue to share that hope. It is the gathering of followers of Jesus, joining together in worship and mission, by which God promises to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and to bring transformation of the world for holiness and faith in God.

Spiritual Gifts—The church is given certain spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church and for the mission of the church in the world. These are distinguished from talents in that they are spiritual in nature and designed specifically for the mission of the Gospel.

Leadership – Scripture teaches that men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. Accordingly, the church should treat women and men equally. We believe that both women and men are called to and gifted for ordained and licensed ministry, and both genders are able to hold leadership roles within Northside Church.

Purpose—The church has a single purpose: to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We carry out this mission through evangelism, worship, prayer, holy living, and good works.

9. Eternity

Forever—Human beings are eternal beings. Though our lives on earth will come to an end, we will exist forever. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with God is heaven.