MAPLE CITY CHAPEL
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Statement of Beliefs

The Bible

- The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living.

  2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

God

- God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. God has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

  Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Jesus

- Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus the Messiah (Christ) is the second person of the tri-personal God. The eternal Son of God became human without ceasing to be God. The Scripture declares His virgin birth; His sinless life; His miracles; His substitutionary death on the cross; His bodily resurrection from the dead; and His exaltation to the right hand of God the Father to now function as our High Priest, where He acts as our Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead.

  Matthew 1:18-23, Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22, John 1:1-14, 1 John 3:4-5, Acts 2:22, 10:37-38, 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Corinthians 15:4, Matthew 28:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:4

Human Beings

- Humans were created in the image of God. However, by a voluntary act of the will, Adam and Eve disobeyed God. That first sin had several repercussions. Humans were excommunicated from the Garden of Eden, a curse was pronounced, the process of physical death began, and the humans died spiritually. Sin separated humankind from God, severing our fellowship from God and God's holiness.

  Genesis 1:26; 3:6, 14-19, 23, Genesis 2:17, Romans 3:23; 5:12-19

Salvation

- Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into one's life by faith.

  Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5

Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make humankind aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily and demonstrate the fruit of a spirit-filled life.

  2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 5:18

Eternity

- People were created to exist forever with their Creator God. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life.

  John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor. 2:7-9

The Sanctity of Human Life

- We believe that all human beings are created by God and in God's image. To be created in God's likeness means that each human bears God's image. To be created in God's image is to possess a value beyond compare. Nothing else in God's creation has the distinction of reflecting God's image; it's a privileged status reserved only for humankind. This means that every person, from conception to natural death, possesses inherent dignity and immeasurable value. This includes preborn children, elderly individuals, people with physical limitations or special needs of any kind, and others marginalized by society. Christians, then, are called to value all human life in both their attitudes and their actions.

  Genesis 1:27

The Value of Humanity

- People matter to God; therefore, they matter to us. Every person is deserving of compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. Therefore, our beliefs on Marriage and Sexuality do not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes towards any individual are not in accordance with the Vision of the Church (The Great Commandment and The Great Commission).

  Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-12, Ephesians 5:25-33

The Church and Her Mission

- The Church is the body of Christ and has a four-fold purpose: to glorify and worship God, to present the Gospel to the world, to care for those in need and fight against injustice, and to care for and equip God's people for faithfulness and ministry.

  1 Corinthians 12:12-28; 14:12, Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20, John 17:8, Ephesians 4:11-16, Isaiah 58:6-12, Matthew 25:31-40, James 1:27, 1 John 3:17-18

The Value and Validity of Singleness

- We believe all Christians are called to love God with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves. God calls Christians to serve him whether in the married state or in the state of sexually abstinent singleness. Marriage is neither a command for all believers or a God-ordained goal for all believers, and as such should never be held out as a measure or test for faithfulness to Christ. Faithful singleness is a noble state, whether it be a temporary state, a calling, or even an unwanted circumstance.

  Matthew 19:8-12, 1 Corinthians 7:1-40

God's Design for Marriage

- Through marriage, God created a place for sexual intimacy between one man and one woman. Although culture and customs have evolved in their definition of marriage, God alone, through Scripture, has the ultimate authority regarding marriage relationships for believers. Though sexual intimacy outside of marriage (one man and one woman) is sinful, the Gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, and receive love and forgiveness though Jesus Christ.

  1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7

God's Design for Sexuality

- Stewardship of sexuality is a life-long responsibility for any and every believer. There is a difference between temptation (attraction), lust (fostering sexual desire) and unrepentant sin (action). Because of Christ, we do not have to be held captive by sexual immorality but can walk in His forgiveness, grace, and power on a daily basis.
- Any sexual behavior or intimacy outside of marriage (between one man and one woman) is considered sexual immorality, which is identified in Scripture. This includes (*equally*): sexual intimacy within premarital relationships, same sex relationships, bisexual relationships, polyamorous relationships, adultery, bestiality, incest, or pornography.
- Because the human body is a creation of God where gender identity is biologically determined, disagreement with one's biological sex (though a legitimate emotionally difficult experience), is regarded as an opportunity to trust God as the designer. Actions to embrace another gender identity other than the one biologically assigned at birth are deemed sinful and in opposition to the Creator.
- Our Church strives to be a safe place for any person sincerely struggling with sexual temptation or gender dysphoria of all kinds. For those struggling with temptation, repenting of sin, and desiring to walk in who God called them to be, we will provide grace, love, care, and direction to encourage each of us to walk in God's upward, inward, and outward love.

  Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Matthew 15:19; 11;28-30; 19:1-9; Ephesians 5:31, 1 Corinthians 4:5; 6:9-11; 10:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Romans 1:26-32, Galatians 5:16-17, Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 13:4, Revelation 21:1-4

The Role of Women in Ministry

- The role of women in ministry is an important topic in which well-intentioned, Bible-believing Christians often disagree. Some Christians believe that certain roles, offices, or responsibilities in the church should be reserved for men (Complementarianism). Others believe that roles, offices, and responsibilities should be determined by calling and gifting regardless of gender (Biblical Equality or Egalitarianism). The elders at Maple City Chapel have spent significant time studying, discussing, and praying about what the Bible has to say on this issue. While some Elders hold to a soft complementarian perspective and others hold to an egalitarian perspective, we share the belief that, when taken as a whole, the Bible allows for women to serve as elders, to teach and preach, and to be licensed/ordained to serve as pastors.

  Judges 4:4-7, 2 Kings 22:14, Matthew 28:10, Luke 8:1-3, Acts 18:26, Acts 21:8-9, 1 Corinthians 11:5, Romans 16:1-15, Colossians 4:15