



Stopsley Baptist Church

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Click on **words in bold** to view word in Glossary.

God

There is one true God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of all things.

The Bible

We believe the Bible, as originally given and complete in its 66 books, is God's perfect, living, and inspired Word. It reveals the true nature of God and his great salvation plan. The Bible is wholly reliable and is the full and final authority for life and **faith**. The Bible reveals God to us as existing eternally in three distinct but equal persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; this is known as the Trinity.

God the Father

We believe God the Father is eternal, all powerful, all knowing and ever present. He is sovereign over all things and in the end will restore all creation to perfect completion in line with his will. He is holy, pure, perfect in love and completely just. In his mercy he hears and answers prayer and welcomes all those who come to him through Jesus **Christ**.

Jesus – God the Son

We believe God the Father sent his only Son Jesus **Christ** who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin. Jesus is both fully God and fully man; he came to earth to demonstrate God's love for humanity through his sinless life, teachings, and miracles. Jesus voluntarily died on the cross, where he took on himself the punishment all humanity deserves for its **sin** (the actions and attitudes that separate us from God) and became a substitute, bearing God's just punishment for sinners through all ages. Then by physically rising from the dead he defeated **Satan, sin**, and death. After his resurrection, he ascended into heaven where he intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

The Holy Spirit

We believe God the Holy Spirit is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit enables us to come to God the Father through Jesus **Christ**, by convicting us of **sin** and applying the saving work of Jesus **Christ** to us. The Holy Spirit lives and works within every believer and the Spirit's presence bears fruit in the development of our character to be more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is our source of assurance, comfort, strength, and wisdom and blesses us with specific roles and unique gifts in order to glorify God together, and to serve one another in love.

Humanity

We believe God made human beings in his image, which gives all people inherent dignity and value. We are made for relationship with God, to love, worship and obey him. The very first humans defied God, choosing to go their independent way, and breaking the relationship with him. The image of God in all humans was tainted by this, resulting in a sinful nature that still inclines us to choose our own way and causes our separation from God. This separation cannot be reversed through our own efforts. Humans are therefore under God's just condemnation; needing to be forgiven and reconciled to him through salvation.

Salvation

We believe we are saved from eternal separation from God only by God's **grace** through **faith** in Jesus **Christ**. We cannot earn salvation. Only when we confess and repent of our **sins** and believe and trust in Jesus **Christ** are we forgiven and made right with God. Salvation results in a person becoming a new creation, being restored to a right relationship with God and being continually transformed to become more and more like **Christ**.

The Church

The church is composed of all people who, through sharing a saving **faith** in Jesus **Christ**, are united together in **faith** and fellowship. The primary purposes of the church are to worship God, to preach the Bible, to experience community with each other, to engage in the process of spiritual growth, to equip each other for service and in words and actions to take the good news of Jesus victory to the world through **mission**.

As a local church we take part in visible signs of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ. These are:

Baptism

Baptism by immersion in water is a public profession of **faith** in **Christ**. It is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of **Christ**. It is a declaration to the world that we have died to **sin** and have been raised with **Christ** to walk in newness of life.

Communion

Communion consists of two elements: the bread and the wine. These elements are symbolic of the body and blood of **Christ**. Communion is a memorial of **Christ** suffering on the cross and a celebration of our salvation until he returns.

The Future

Jesus will one day return to renew all things and to bring together heaven and earth so that God's dwelling is once again with people. On his return Jesus will judge the people of the earth in truth and righteousness. All those who trust him to save them will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. All those who reject his gift of **grace** will endure the reality of his eternal judgement and separation from him.

This statement reflects what we hold to be essential core beliefs. We align with the totality of God's word recognising that, through study in freedom and conscience, individuals may come to different interpretations and applications of other matters that we hold to be less essential. In love we fully respect such varying points of view provided the essential core beliefs are not compromised.

"Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, charity in all things"

(likely author Rupertus Meldenus - Lutheran Theologian, circa 1627)

Sin

Our Spiritual condition whereby we are inclined, in word, deed, or desire, to disobey the eternal law of God as expressed in the Bible, and our specific acts of disobedience themselves (sins).

Satan also known as "the Devil"

A spiritual entity who seeks to turn humanity against God by tempting and encouraging us to sin. The Bible describes Satan as a liar, thief and a deceiver whose power and influence, while significant, is ultimately limited and defeated by God.

Christ

The title given to Jesus, a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah – "the anointed or chosen one". Jesus Christ connects the name (Jesus) with the title (Christ), meaning "Jesus, the anointed One", or "Jesus, the chosen One", combining his human name with his title as "the chosen and anointed Son of God".

Repentance

A response to our recognition of our sin whereby we turn our backs on our disobedience and, with God's help, commit to live differently. For the Christian, implicit in repentance is that we ask for God's forgiveness, choose daily to follow Christ, surrender control of our lives to him, and accept the offer of our place in God's kingdom from now into eternity.

Faith

Belief, confidence and trust based, not on external fact, but on inner spiritual conviction gifted to us from God and placed in us by the Holy Spirit. For the Christian, faith is believing that God is who he says he is and that he will fulfil his promises through Jesus Christ.

Grace

The undeserved love and mercy given to us by God at immeasurable personal cost to Jesus. Given not because of anything we have done, or could ever do, to earn or deserve it but because God, out of his love for us, desires us to have it.

Mission

The directive given by Jesus to his people on earth; to spread the good news of his salvation to others through individual testimony, through behaviour and lifestyle, our corporate life together as church and by going beyond our safety and comfort zones in pursuit of opportunities to share our faith.

Gospel

The translation of a Greek word meaning "Good News". The "good news of Jesus Christ" is that he came to earth, he died to take the punishment for our sins so that we could be reconciled to God, and that he rose from death as the sign of the new life that this reconciliation with God brings to us.

If, after reading and reflecting on this "good news of Jesus Christ" you have come to realise the truth of your separation from God and your need of his rescue and, if you genuinely want to respond to him, then the simple prayer below will help you do that;

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for loving me so much that you came to earth and died on the cross to rescue me. I confess that I am lost and trapped in sin that is wholly mine and that this has separated me from you. I repent of my sin and in faith I turn to you to forgive and restore me. I accept your incredible gift of eternal life and I commit my life to you so that it might be wholly devoted to Your service and the carrying out of your mission to the world. Amen

If you have prayed this prayer with sincerity, then be in no doubt that your spiritual situation has changed. We would encourage you, as an act of faith, to share this fact with someone else as soon as possible. We would love to hear from you so that we might pray for, encourage, and celebrate together with you. We would urge you to seek out a church fellowship close to where you are so that you can fully participate in the fellowship and support that is a part of the corporate life of God's kingdom.

God Bless you.