

Beacon Falls Congregational Church Doctrinal Beliefs
(as adopted to our Constitution and Bylaws, December 2019)

The Bible

The Scriptures, made up of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired, inerrant, eternal, and authoritative Word of God. They serve as the supreme and sufficient authority in all matters of faith, conduct and Christian living. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Mark 13:31; Matt. 4:4)

Trinity

There is only one true God. He is supremely good, glorious, loving, and holy. God is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. These three are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10; John 14:16-17)

- **God the Father** is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, and unchangeable. Nothing happens except through Him and by His will. (Gen. 1:1; Lev. 11:45; Rom. 1:20)
- **God the Son** is Jesus Christ, Who is truly God and truly man. In the incarnation, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a perfect life among us, was crucified, died, and buried. He defeated death by rising on the third day, and ascended to heaven. He is the only mediator between God and Man. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. (Col.1:15-20; John 14:6; Heb. 2:17; 1 Cor. 15:2-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-2)
- **God the Holy Spirit** was sent from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. He indwells every genuine believer in Christ as an abiding Comforter, Helper and Guide. (Rom. 8:26-27; Gal. 5:22-23; John 14:26; Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 7:21-23)

Holiness of God

God's holiness refers to His absolute purity and to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. We are called to holiness because He is holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16; Isa. 57:15; 1 Sam. 2:2; Lev. 11:45)

Creation

God created the heavens and the earth, and everything in it, and His original creation was perfect with no death or suffering. His crowning creation was mankind whom He made in His image, and gave the gift of free will. (Gen. 1:1; Gen. 1:26-31; John 1:3; Joshua 24:15; Deut. 30:19-20)

Sin/Depravity of Mankind

The world is now full of suffering, pain, and evil due to humans' rebellion against God, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. As a result, all humans are born with a sinful nature, and disobey God in thought, word, and deed. Tragically, we love people and things more than we love the God Who made us; and are therefore under His just condemnation, without defense or excuse. (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:18-19; Rom. 3:23)

Salvation

Salvation is deliverance from condemnation, the forgiveness of our sins, and the guarantee of eternal life. Salvation is obtained through faith in the life, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. (John 3:16-18; Matt. 19:25-26; Acts 16:31; Acts 2:21)

- **Repentance** is a sincere turning away, in both mind and heart, from sin against God and a sincere commitment to walk in obedience to Him going forward. (Matt. 4:17; Acts 3:19; Luke 5:31-32)
- **Saving Faith** is trusting the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for our salvation. Those with saving faith have been 'born again' into eternal life. (John 3:3; John 3:6-7; Mark 16:16; 1 John 5:13)
 - **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ** is the core doctrine of our faith. Most simply put, a Christian is someone who believes in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, and lives in light of the implications of it. (Rom. 10:9)
 - The resurrection demonstrated to the whole universe the deity of Jesus and God's love for him. (Rom. 1:4; Acts 5:30-31) It gives us the joy of knowing that Christ is with us today. (Matt. 16:18). It gives us hope beyond the grave. (1 Thess. 4:13) The resurrection purchased our justification and reconciliation. (Rom. 4:25, 2 Cor 5:18-20). It assures us that Christ will personally return to judge and rule the world. (Acts 17:30-31)
- **Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners who believe in Jesus Christ, not on account of any good works we have done, but solely through receiving Him and relying on Him through faith. (Rom. 3:26; Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:24; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 2:16)
- **Reconciliation** - As our sins are forgiven and erased God draws us to Himself, completely changing us to new beings in a right and harmonious relationship with Him. (Rom 5:10-11, Col 1:20-22)
- **Assurance/Eternal State** - Those who have been born again are kept by God's power, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and are thus secure in Jesus Christ forever. They may rest and rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, and eagerly await everlasting bliss and delight in heaven. (Rom. 8:16; Heb. 10:22) Those who are unsaved will suffer eternal separation from God, everlasting punishment and torment in hell. (Rev. 21:8; Mark 9:43)

We thus affirm that salvation is through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, by God's grace alone, according to the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. (Eph. 1:7; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 10:31; Acts 4:12; 2 Cor. 5:21; Jude 1:25; Titus 1:9; Matt. 4:4)

Church

The Church is the Body of Jesus Christ, composed of His genuine believers. As head of the Church, the Lord Jesus calls us to the faithful preaching of His Word, making of His disciples, and reaching the world for His sake. We are a fellowship of the flawed but forgiven, carrying out His purposes and will in the world. (Matt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 1:18; Matt. 7:21-23)

- **Women and Men in Ministry** - God created both men and women in His own image; therefore both are called to serve equally in the ministries of this Church. (Gal. 3:28; Rom. 16:1-4)
- **Sanctity of Life** - We embrace the inherent dignity and immeasurable worth of all human beings' lives from conception to natural death. (Psalm 139:13-15; Exod. 20:13; Gal. 1:15; Jer. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eccl. 8:8; Job 1:21)

Prayer

Prayer is the essential and direct communication between people and God, and is the way we develop a personal relationship with Him. Although God is sovereign over everything, He uses prayer as the means to accomplish His divine will; changing our hearts into conformity with His will. We pray to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 7:7-8; 1 John 5:14; Matt. 6:9-13; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Sacraments

We celebrate two Sacraments as the outward, physical signs of inward, spiritual realities.

- **Baptism** is the symbolic washing with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is the sign and seal of God's covenant of grace with us and our children. Our congregation commits itself to the spiritual nurture and fellowship of the infant, child, or adult being baptized. (1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; John 1:29-33)
- **The Lord's Supper** (also called Holy Communion) is a perpetual remembrance of Jesus' saving work where we proclaim His death, resurrection, and His future return. Our Lord instituted this feast on the night He was betrayed, using the visible elements of bread and wine to teach His disciples to spiritually receive and feed on Him. In these simple actions, believers experience communion with Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper is open to all who have repented of their sins and who hold Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. You need not be a member of this Church to join in this feast with us. (1 Cor. 11:24-29; Matt. 26:26-28; John 6:48-54)

Rites

We observe three rites as solemn ceremonies marking significant rites of passage in our faith lives.

- **Confirmation** is the sacred ordinance where students who have been baptized and properly educated, renew and ratify the promises made at their Baptism. The Church, in turn, receives them into full membership and prays for their filling with the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:10; John 20:22; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:6)
- **Holy Matrimony** - We believe that marriage is the exclusive, covenantal union of one man and one woman, as designed by God. We will faithfully follow the scriptural definition of marriage (Gen 1:27; Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-9; Mark 10:1-12; Eph. 5:30-33) in the teachings and practices of this Church, and therefore this Church will not officiate, solemnize, perform or host a marriage or marriage-like ceremony involving anything other than the union of one man and one woman as instituted by God.
 - We further refer to God's Commandments and Scriptural Teachings listed herein concerning sexual activity: Exd. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:18-20
 - We fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be condemned as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures, nor the doctrines of this Church. (Eph. 4:31-32; Matt. 7:3-5; Col. 3:13)
- **Christian Burial** (either bodily or cremation) is both the celebration of, and thanksgiving to God for a life lived among us. We commit the soul of our dearly departed into the hands of Almighty God, taking comfort in His promises. (Rev. 21:4; Phil. 1:21-23; Psalm 116:15; 2 Cor. 5:6)