

Westside Community Church

Statement of Faith

Revised 4-17-2010

All elders and members of Westside Community Church affirm the following Statement of Faith as clarified by the accompanying notes. We believe a statement of faith holds our leaders to an objective standard for teaching and practice, and creates a unity of belief and purpose in our membership. We look back into history, drawing on the wisdom of those who have gone before us, always seeking to be true to the intent of Scripture.

I. Catechism (17th century)

What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

II. Creed (4th century)

We believe in one God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man;

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures;

and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there shall be no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father,

Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

In one holy catholic and apostolic Church;

We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins;

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen.

III. Solas (16th century)

We believe in the *solas* (Latin for "alone") of the Protestant Reformation:

a. *Sola Scriptura*: by Scripture alone. The Bible is our final authority and sole infallible guide to doctrine.

Acts 17:10-11 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. - Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 7:1-13; 2 Tim 3:14-17

b. *Sola Fide*: by faith alone. Salvation is by faith alone, in no way earned by our good works.

Luke 7:50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." - 2 Tim 3:15; 1 Peter 1:9

c. *Sola Gratia*: by grace alone. Salvation is due to God's grace alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.- Titus 3:5-7

d. *Solo Christus*: Christ alone. There is salvation in none other.

Acts 4:11-12 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.- John 14:6

e. *Soli Deo Gloria*: glory to God alone. All the glory for salvation and life goes to God alone.

Psalms 148:13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.- Jeremiah 10:6; 1 Samuel 2:2

IV. Doctrine

Truth

We believe that truth is knowable and we are to seek truth, love truth, and grow in truth through the study of God's word and God's world. We are to love God with our minds as well as with our hearts and souls.

Matthew 22:37-38 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.; John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.- Isaiah 45:19; Zechariah 8:19; John 1:17, 18:37; Romans 1:18; Titus 1:1; 1 John 2:21

The Scriptures

We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. – Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 12:6, 19:7-10, 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 21:33, 24:44-47; John 16:13-15, 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21

God

We believe there is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself, all perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. – Genesis 1:1-2:3; Exodus 3:14; Psalm 19:1-3; Jeremiah 10:10; John 4:24; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:17; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6

The Trinity

We believe that God's whole and undivided infinite being belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct persons of the Godhead - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 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,

Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." – Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 5:26, 14:6-13, 14:15-17; Romans 8:14-15; Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus the Mediator

We believe that Jesus Christ, the one and only unique Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human flesh and nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law; suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He lives forever to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the Universe.

Colossians 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily; Hebrews 10:14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified - Psalm 2:7ff; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 52:13-53:12; Matthew 1:18-23, 8:29, 11:27, 16:16, 17:5, 26:1-28:20; Luke 1:35, 24:46; John 1:1-18, 11:25-27, 16:28, 17:1-5, 20:1-20; Acts 1:9, 2:22-24, 7:55-56, 9:20; Romans 1:3-4, 3:23-26, 5:6-21, 8:1-3, 8:34, 10:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 3:16; Titus 2:12-13; Hebrews 1:1-3, 4:14-15, 7:14-28, 9:12-15, 9:24-28, 12:2, 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25, 3:22; 1 John 2:2, 4:14-15; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 5:9-14, 19:16

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ, our Savior. He indwells every believer from the moment of salvation, providing the power for living, understanding spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. We seek to live under His control daily.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. - 2 Corinthians 3:17, John 16:7-13, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; Galatians 5:25

God's Providence

We believe that God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any way to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the real moral agency and responsibility of intelligent creatures. God is all-powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present and future, including the future decisions of His creatures.

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today; Acts 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. - Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 46:8-11; Ezekiel 18:25-32; Proverbs 16:9; Romans 8:28; Revelation 21:3-5

Human Beings

We believe that human beings are creatures of God, made in the image of God. This means that humanity originated, not through naturalistic evolution, but through a conscious, purposeful act by God. In addition, the image of God is intrinsic and indispensable to humanity, setting humanity apart from the rest of creation. Humans alone have the capability of a conscious personal relationship with the God the Creator. We have a will, emotions, and reason; we can think and act creatively; and we have the ability to interact socially with others. Being made in the image of God gives us the qualities that make worship of God, personal interaction with God, and love for God possible.

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. - Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23

The Fall of Mankind

We believe that God originally created the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve, in His own image, and free from sin. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. But, through the temptation of Satan, Adam transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his descendants inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, are under condemnation, and as soon as we are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors. We are naturally totally depraved, unable even to seek God apart from His regenerating grace.

Romans 3:10-11 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God; Romans 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. - Genesis 1:26-28, 2:20-25, 3:1-19, 6:5; Psalm 14:2-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23, 5:12-21

Election

We believe that election is God's unconditional eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life--not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mercy in Christ. As a result they are called, justified and glorified.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. -

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

John 6:44; Romans 8:28-33, 9:11-13, 11:7; Ephesians 1:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1, 2:9; Revelation 13:7-8

Regeneration

We believe that regeneration (or being “born again”) is a change of heart, caused by the Holy Spirit, who brings to spiritual life people who are dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free, special and irresistible grace alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. - Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 1:12-13, 3:3-8, 6:44-45; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1, 2:5; Colossians 2:13; James 1:18; I Peter 1:3, 1:23-25; I John 2:29, 4:7, 5:1, 5:3-4, 5:18

Repentance

We believe that repentance is a saving grace, given by the Holy Spirit, where a person is made sensible of the extent of the evil of his sin, and humbles himself for it, with godly sorrow and detestation of it, with a purpose and endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." - Isaiah 1:16-17; Jeremiah 3:22a; Joel 2:12-14; Acts 2:37-38; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

Faith

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

Romans 3:28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. - Genesis 12:1-3, 15:6; Exodus 19:5-8; Jeremiah 31:31ff; John 1:12, 3:16; Romans 3:21-5:11, 10:17; Ephesians 2:1-10; Hebrews 11:1

Atonement (Propitiation)

We believe that Jesus atoned (paid, propitiated) for sins as a perfect substitute for His elect children, gathered from every people group, paying their ransom and rescuing them from God's holy wrath. By virtue of this, they are perfectly saved.

Matthew 1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."; Mark 14:24 And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.; Romans 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.; Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation; - Romans 3:25-26, 9:33; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10

Justification

We believe that justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the perfect obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receive and rest on Him and His imputed righteousness by faith.

Galatians 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. - Genesis 15:6; John 1:12, 3:16; Romans 3:24-25, 4:6-8, 5:17-19; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 3:9

Sanctification

We believe that those who have been regenerated are also sanctified by God's word and Spirit dwelling in them. This sanctification is progressive through the supply of Divine strength, which all saints seek to obtain, pressing after a heavenly life in obedience to all Christ's commands.

Hebrews 10:14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. - Romans 6:1-18; Romans 8:13-14; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:23-24; Philippians 3:13-14; Colossians 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:1; Hebrews 12:14; Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 1:15; I John 3:3ff

Works

Our works justify us before men, but not before God. They are the good deeds He planned in advance for us to perform for the furtherance of His kingdom. They are the result rather than the cause of our salvation and sanctification.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.; James 2:21-22 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;

Preservation of the Saints

We believe that those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly be preserved to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again to repentance, and be preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. - John 3:36, 5:24, 6:38-40, 8:31-32; Romans 8:1, 8:33-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:14; I Peter 1:5; 1 John 2:19, 5:13

The Church

We believe that the Lord Jesus is the head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches He has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which He has appointed. The scriptural officers of the Church are Pastors or Elders, and Deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of Pastor or Elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. - Matthew 16:15-19, 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-47, 5:11-14, 6:3-6, 14:23, 15:1-30, 20:28; I Corinthians 1:2, 5:1-5, 12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:6; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19-22; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 2:8-14, 3:1-15; I Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3, 21:2-3

Baptism

We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, wherein believers are immersed in water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of their fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving themselves up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. Since baptism signifies the beginning of one's Christian life and is obligatory for all believers, it is prerequisite to church membership.

Matthew 28:19 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." - Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42, 8:12, 8:35-39, 10:48, 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12

The Lord's Supper (Communion)

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine (or grape juice), and to be observed by His churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.

Matthew 26:26-29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." - Mark 14:2-26; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:37-47, I Corinthians 11:23-29

The Lord's Day

We believe that the Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance, and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Romans 14:5-6 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. - Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Matthew 28:1ff; Mark 2:27-28; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3; John 4:21-24; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16-17; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25

The Resurrection

We believe that the bodies of men and women after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God—the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked, to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. At the last day, the bodies of all the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised.

1 Corinthians 15:12-14 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. - Romans 6:1-18, 8:13-14, 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:23-24; Philippians 3:13-14; Colossians 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:1, 12:14, 13:20-21; I Peter 1:15; I John 3:3ff

The Judgment

We believe that God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life.

Luke 12:4-7 "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. - Isaiah 2:4, 11:9; Matthew 16:27, 18:8-9, 24:36, 25:31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Acts 17:31; Romans 14:10; I Corinthians 4:5, 15:24-28, 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5, 3:4; I Thessalonians 4:14-18, 5:1ff; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff; I Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff; I John 2:28; I John 3:2; Revelation 20:1-22:13

NOTES

I. Catechism

This is the first question from the Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1674. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/westminster1.i.i.html>).

II. Creed

This is the Nicea-Constantinople Creed of 381 A. D. in an English translation as used by the Orthodox Church in America with several minor modernizations. This does not include the filioque clause added by the Western church two centuries later. See more on the filioque at the end of this section.

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate

Some have questioned the relevance of mentioning Pontius Pilate, but this serves to place our theology squarely in real space-time history.

In one holy catholic and apostolic Church

“Catholic” means “universal;” it encompasses all people groups. “Apostolic” means 1st century apostles of Jesus Christ established the early church. We do not believe in modern-day apostles.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins

See Acts 2:38, which reads, *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

We believe baptism is obedience to Christ and a sign of our commitment to Him. We don't believe baptism itself forgives our sins, as explained in 1 Peter 3:21, *Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

Baptism is an outward sign of our appeal to God through the salvation and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Filioque: The filioque, Latin for “and the Son,” was added following this phrase: “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].” Here is an Orthodox argument against including the filioque:

“The *filioque* distorts Orthodox Triadology by making the Spirit a subordinate member of the Trinity. Traditional Triadology consists in the notion that for any given trait, it must be either common to all Persons of the Trinity or unique to one of them. Thus, Fatherhood is unique to the Father, while begottenness is unique to the Son, and procession unique to the Spirit. Godhood, however, is common to all, as is eternity, uncreatedness, and so forth. Positing that something can be shared by two Persons (i.e., being the source of the Spirit's procession) but not the other is to elevate those two Persons at the expense of the other. Thus, the balance of unity and diversity is destroyed.”

Our older version of the creed is more consistently based on John 15:26: “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

III. Sola

There are no notes at this time.

IV. Doctrine

This section is based on the Abstract of Principles adopted by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1858, with a few minor changes and several additions (<http://wwwFOUNDERS.org/abstract.html>).