

RUSHVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"WE BELIEVE" STATEMENTS

God

- God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. The Bible describes God as eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.
 - **God as the Father:** Gives life, protection, provision and presence. God is the Father of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and yet remains one with both. He is the adoptive Father of all Christians (believers in/followers of Jesus as the Christ).
 - **God as the Son:** Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of a virgin, the God-Man given to save us. He is equal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He conquered the power of sin and death and arose from the dead after three days. He ascended to Heaven and will return again someday to earth to reign as the Ultimate King and Rescuer.
 - **God as the Spirit:** God's (Holy) Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to make men 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 spiritual gifts when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under the Spirit's power daily.
- Our one God is active in the world through His three persons as recorded in the Bible.

Scripture References: *Genesis 1:1,26,27, 3:22, Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Matthew 1:22,23, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-5, 14:10-30, Hebrews 4:14,15, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Romans 1:3-4, Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13, 2 Corinthians 3:17, John 16:7-13, 14:16,17, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16, Ephesians 1:13, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 5:18.*

The Bible

- The 66 books of the Bible are God's Word to us. Its authors were divinely inspired. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. It can be trusted as such. The Bible in the original languages is without any mixture of error. It is the standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be measured. Humans beings must strive to adhere to the Bible, not make the Bible adhere to Human beings.

Scripture References: *2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20,21, 2 Timothy 1:13, Psalm 12:6, 119:105,160, Proverbs 30:5, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Jeremiah 1:9, Hebrews 4:12, John 10:35, Revelation 22:18-19.*

Human Beings

- People, distinctly male and female in design, are made by God to be like Him in character and live in eternal relationship with Him. People are the supreme object of God's creation. No other created things have the responsibility or identity equal to humans. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, humanity has been influenced by Satan and are ruined by attitudes and actions of disobedience toward God called "sin". Sin separates us from God, causes many destructive problems in life and leads to God's judgment in death now and forever. Only in a relationship with Jesus Christ will God extend His grace to us and repair our separation from Him in life and death. This offering of grace and reparation of our relationship with Him in Christ is salvation.

Scripture References: *Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 3, Genesis 8:21, Psalm 139:14, Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a, 1 John 1:10, Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:12, Isaiah 59:1,2, John 14:6, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:20.*

Salvation

- Salvation is God's gift to us but we must truly accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. We cannot be "good enough" to earn salvation. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer for forgiveness can anyone be spared from the death penalty of sin. When we respond to God and turn from our self-ruled life and turn to a heartfelt life of faith that follows Jesus Christ, we are saved. The Church consists of Jesus' saved followers.

Scripture References: Mark 16:16, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:23, 1 John 1:10, Luke 13:5, Acts 17:30, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 10:9-10,13, Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 10:32-33, Acts 2:38, 22:16, Romans 6:3-4, 1 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 1:14, Philippians 2:12-13.

The Church

- The Bible uses many word pictures to describe the Church.
 - The Church is a fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ. This is not limited by geography, era or denomination. The top priorities in a fellowship are unity and peace.
 - We believe the Church is a family. We are all brothers and sisters adopted into God's household.
 - The scripture describes the Church as the Body of Christ. This means we hold together in form and function under Jesus as our head.
 - Jesus himself describes the Church as a flock. Christ is the "Good Shepherd" of the flock and appoints mature Christians as overseers of His Church.
 - We are also described as the Bride of Christ. The Bible describes the relationship Jesus has with His Church as a sacred marriage.
 - Finally, the Church is defined as the Kingdom of Christ. Jesus is our ultimate King and we serve Him as His representatives in the world. His is an eternal kingdom, which determines the future of all creation.

Scripture References: Ephesians 4:3, Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, Hebrews 2:11, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:23, Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18, 2:19, Romans 12:4-6, Ephesians 4:11-12, John 10:1-30, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 25:33, 1 Peter 5:1-2, John 21:16-17, Acts 20:28, Revelation 21:2, Revelation 21:9.

The Future-Eternity

- People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation in Christ. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be forever in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

Scripture References: John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor. 2:7-9, Hebrews 2:14, Matthew 24.

“WE AGREE” STATEMENTS

“In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love.”

We hold fast to the essential beliefs of a Biblical Christian Worldview while understanding that non-essential issues are in discussion on a consistent basis within the true Church. In all things we strive for love. We will not let Satan use arrogance in human thinking to drive a wedge between believers using our own viewpoints against us.

We Agree in Regard to...

Predestination vs. Free Will

- God is in control, yet people are called to respond to God and choose to follow Him. We will preach and teach stressing people’s responsibility but with the serenity of understanding that God is sovereign, purposeful and rules over His creation. The unity of the Church is far more valuable than trying to presume the mind of God and track His and our movements with exact detail.

Scripture References: *Genesis 2:15-17, Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Exodus 9:16, Joshua 11:20, 24:15, 2 Samuel 24:12, 1 Kings 3:14, 2 Kings 19:25, Job 14:5, Psalm 65:4, Proverbs 16:33, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 23:37, Luke 22:22, John 6:44, John 3:16, John 15:6-7, Acts 2:21-22, Acts 3:18, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 10:13, Ephesians 1:4-5, 11-12, 2:10, Colossians 1:22-23, Hebrews 10:36-39, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 4:1, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:1-12.*

The Nature of Sin

- The original presence, nature and affect of sin has been in dispute by the Church for a long time. Whether your interpretation is that man’s sin is original or acquired, corruptive or destructive, personal or global, the definitive position relative to salvation is that sin is in every human life, has devastating effects on creation and separates us from God. Unpardoned sin is part of a person’s soul and the determiner of a person’s destiny without a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Scripture References: *Genesis Chapter 3, Genesis 6:5, Genesis 8:21, Job 15:14-16, Psalm 14:2-3, Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 59:2, Isaiah 64:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 1:21, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 8:3, Ephesians 2:3, Hebrews 9:27-28, James 5:20, 1 John 1:7.*

Eternal Security vs. Good Works

- We trust in Christ for our security and not our works. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the means for salvation. If we love Jesus, anything we do (or leave undone) cannot separate us from His love for us. However, we agree that an overt and heartfelt rejection of Jesus as Lord and Savior indicates one of two conditions in the person: 1. They are an unbeliever. 2. They have believed but intentionally desire to turn away from Jesus back to a life without Him. In either case, our approach is to always hope for reconciliation and restore anyone who admits offense, desires to turn from it, trusts in Christ and follows Him.

Scripture References: *John 10:27-29, Romans 8:35-39, Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 1:5, Romans 11:29, John 6:37-39, Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Timothy 2:11-12, Hebrews 6:4-6, Ezekiel 18:24-26, 1 John 2:3-4, John 10:28, 2 Peter 2:20-22, John 3:18, Romans 10:13, Luke 6:46, Mark 11:25, Matthew 13:18-23, Matthew 24:13, 2 Peter 1:9-10, Galatians 5:4.*

The Use of Spiritual Gifts

- The subject of Spiritual Gifts is steeped in dispute for various reasons. God gives spiritual gifts to His people for the benefit of the Church. We believe the presence of Spiritual Gifts is irrefutable and their use in the Church is essential. However, we agree that the presence of a specific Spiritual gift is not **the** sign of being in Christ. True gifts are given to believers in different varieties at salvation. Gifts like speaking in tongues, personal prophecy and “faith healing” in public gatherings, church services, or small groups are to be tempered for the sake of unity and edification of the community under Jesus Christ.

Scripture References: *Acts 2:4-8, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 14:3-5, 6-12, 1 Peter 4:10-11, Hebrews 2:3-4.*

Gender Roles

- The lively question in regard to God’s view of gender roles in the Church is continually debated. In regard to gender roles, we believe in the calling of all believers and equality with regard to oneness in Christ. Men and women are equal bearers and sharers of God’s image. Nevertheless, we agree to take a **complimentary view** in matters of gender in Church government and family. This view holds that men and women were created uniquely from each other, to compliment each other. The scripture indicates that males uniquely are to be called to and active in the church leadership positions of elder and pastor. This does not prohibit women from sharing Christ publicly, teaching, leading, or serving in other areas of Church service. The Complimentary view also holds that males are accountable to deny themselves and spiritually lead their families. In the home, wives are called to be accountable and respectful to their husbands.

Scripture References: *Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18, John 1:12-13, Acts 2:17, Acts 21:9, Romans 8:14, 16:1-7, 12-13, 15, 1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-12, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 5:21-33, Philippians 4:2-3, Colossians 3:18-19, Colossians 4:15, Galatians 3:26-28, 5:13, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 1 Timothy 3:2-8,11, Titus 1:5-7, 2:3-5, Peter 2:9-10, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Revelation 5:10.*

The End Times

- The specific details in regard to the end times are a source of great, unsettled, debate amongst Christians. We agree that God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world, as we know it to its appropriate end. Heaven and Earth will be made new. Jesus said He will return publicly and personally to the earth and that no person will know the day and time. All will be brought before Jesus, be judged on their relationship with Him and either spend eternity with Him in heaven or in eternity without him in hell. The specific belief a person holds in regard to predicting the details of the end times is not a salvation issue. Ultimately, we agree the future is in God’s mighty hands and the chief concern of believers should be whether they are ready when that time comes.

Scripture References: *Genesis 9:11, Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, Matthew 24:5-28, 35-36, Mark 13:32, Luke 21:25-26, 36, Hebrews 1:1-2, James 5:8-9, 2 Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 21:1.*

“WE PRACTICE” STATEMENTS

The practices below are not valuable as things we merely “do”. They are expressions, engagements and outpourings in and through the Spirit of God in Christ with meaning and weight far beyond the physical activity. If they are tasks we only complete; the significance is lost as the value of the act alone is empty.

Scripture References: Isaiah 1:12-15, Matthew 15:1-9, Mark 7:1-8, Isaiah 29:13-14

Ministry in Covenant (Membership means Ministry)

- We encourage all believers to become involved in what the Lord Jesus is doing to bring about his movement of people in this generation to affect the world for Him. This includes ministry and service in the local Church, community, region, country and/or world. It begins with the understanding that all believers are saved in order to serve. The salvation of believers doesn't end with induction into Christ as believers; it begins. We strive to offer opportunities in ministry for believers who attend which include those who have committed at a deeper level in “Covenant Partnership”. Covenant Partnership is an agreement, between the believer and this Church community, to be accountable, responsible and invested in the ministry of the Church. Covenant Partnership, to us is a better modifier of the term, “membership”. It is an agreement to worship and serve in unity under shared beliefs. We also strive to create and foster ministry opportunities in the community, region, country and world on an informal and formal basis.

Scripture References: Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 12:14-13:13, Luke 9:23, Ephesians 2:10, Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 12:9-13, Philippians 2:12, 4:9, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Peter 2:5.

Immersion Baptism

- We baptize new believers in Christ by immersing their whole body in water as the early Church did in the New Testament. There are many Biblical reasons for this practice. Jesus Christ set the example of baptism in the Bible by being baptized by immersion. He commanded this type of baptism as a sacred act of obedience when people are converted. It is a statement by the believer to others of their conversion process and obedience to Jesus as Lord and Savior. This type of baptism symbolizes Christ's death and resurrection; it is a picture of new birth as a Christian. It is a ceremonial cleansing of sin. We fully identify with Jesus for when we are baptized, we put on Christ. It is the initiation of the believer's membership into the global and historic Church. It is part of the conversion process when one is saved.

Scripture References: Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:36-41, Acts 8:12-13, Acts 18:8, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:1-5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 36-40, Galatians 3:26-27, Ephesians 4:30, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:18-22, 1 John 2:3.

The Lord's Supper (Communion)

- We participate in the Lord's Supper or Communion at each Sunday service. Believers are commanded to remember the Lord's death by taking an actual meal of bread and grape juice. Jesus instituted this meal at the Last Supper the night he was betrayed. He used the bread and wine as a symbol of his broken body and shed blood on the cross. When we take this meal it is an announcement of our beliefs and the reality behind the symbolic elements. This meal is a participation in the community of Christ and is therefore kept by those who are at peace with the Christian community. In addition, we must always take this meal in a way that honors Christ and the meaning of the meal. Believers can prepare for this meal by self-examination, confession of sins, recommitment to Christ or restoring relationships.

Scripture References: Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:19, Mark 14:22-25, Acts 2:42, 20:7, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, 1 John 1:9.

Life Stewardship (Life as Worship/Ministry/Mission)

- God expects wise management of the resources He has given us in both our personal and our congregational lives. We understand that everything we have and are belongs to the Lord. Our resources include but are not limited to: time, money, talents, spiritual gifts, our children, homes, occupations, etc. The Lord is always held in higher esteem than our resources. We practice child dedication as part of honoring and stewarding our lives with God. We believe the Bible teaches cheerful giving as the correct attitude to give to the Lord. Giving comes from a desire in the heart. We encourage planned financial giving for the support of the ministry, as God commands and as the early Church modeled. We recognize that giving a proportional percentage (usually 10%) of our income is the traditional Biblical standard of giving to support the ministry of the Church. This simply gives us a starting point to grow our financial giving.

Scripture References: *Psalm 24:1, Genesis 1:28, 1 Samuel 1:21-28, Matthew 25:29, Matthew 6:21, Luke 2:22-23, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 6:3, Acts 2:44-45, Romans 12:1.*

Worship and Hearing/Doing the Word

- The gathering on Sunday mornings focuses on various aspects of Christian worship like prayer, giving, communion, relationships and singing. We sing a collection of meaningful songs that aren't specifically chosen based on genre or generation. We also focus on hearing and responding to the Word of God. We not only want to worship the Lord and hear His Word, but we strive to be people who act on it. Therefore, we practice being "doers" in our lives of what God teaches us through in the life of the Church.

Scripture References: *Jeremiah 26:2, Hebrews 10:24-25, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Timothy 4:13, Colossians 3:16, James 1:22-25*