



Statement of Faith

RIVERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
of Christian Brethren

Believe *Belong* *Become*
IN CHRIST TO CHRIST LIKE CHRIST
2 COR 4:5-6

THE WORD OF GOD

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as God's revelation of Himself and God's will for the salvation of mankind and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

THE TRINITY

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that these are equal and perfect in every divine attribute and that they execute distinct and harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men and women, hears and answers prayer, and saves from sin and its penalty all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and fully possesses the same nature and attributes as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is not only true God, but true Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His high priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal return from heaven.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, co-equal with the Father and the Son. We believe in His personality and His work in regeneration, sanctification and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost. He also indwells, seals, secures and empowers the believer for godly living and fruitful service through the giving of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are given to all believers by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the church. The manifestation of spiritual gifts should be in accordance with the principles and practices outlined in the New Testament. In this respect Riverstone Community Church of Christian Brethren is not 'charismatic' in the modern usage of the word.

CREATION

We believe that the triune God, through the agency of Jesus Christ, created the heavens, the earth and everything that exists *ex nihilo*, that is, *out of nothing*, in six literal 24-hour days less than ten thousand years ago as recorded in the first book of the Bible.

HUMANITY

We believe that God created humanity, men and women of equal value in His sight, in the image of God and free from sin. As a result of the fall, we further believe all persons are sinners by nature, choice and practice are, therefore, spiritually dead. We also believe that the Holy Spirit regenerates those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Saviour. We believe that God created men and women equal in His sight, and that He intended them to have different and complementary roles and responsibilities in their relationships.

SALVATION

We believe that God wants all mankind to be saved and has made full provision for the salvation of all through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. We believe that salvation is given by grace and received through faith and that it is based upon the sovereign grace of God who, by His Holy Spirit, convicts of sin and regenerates all who repent and believe the gospel. Salvation is received through faith apart from any human merit, works, or ritual. We believe that there is a Biblical position in which God is absolutely sovereign in salvation, and at the same time, humanity is completely responsible to accept or reject that salvation. We believe that, just as this salvation is not earned by works or deeds, so it cannot be lost by misdeeds.

THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head and is composed of all persons who possess saving faith in Jesus Christ and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This body expresses itself in local churches comprised of believers in Christ. The ordinances of the local church are believers' baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. We believe in the priesthood of all believers; that all believers have the privilege and right of direct access to God through Jesus Christ. We believe in both the independence (or autonomy) of each local church and in the fellowship and loving relationship among all believers in the body of Christ. We believe that the church leadership, known Biblically as "Elders, Overseers or Shepherds", should be comprised of a plurality of spiritually qualified men who are appointed by the Holy Spirit and recognised by the Church and its leadership. We also believe all men and women are directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life.

MARRIAGE

We believe that God instituted marriage and ordained it to be between one man and one woman for life and that it is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at one and the same time. The husband and the wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. God ordained not only marriage but the nature of the relationship between a husband and a wife. By God's design, a husband and a wife are to complement one another. The husband is to be a loving servant-leader and the wife to be a helper suitable to him. The husband-wife relationship should reflect the nature of the relationship of Christ and the Church.

We believe that sexual intimacy should only ever be within the confines of the marriage relationship. We believe that sexual intimacy alone does not constitute marriage and that therefore sexual infidelity does not of itself nullify a marriage. Adultery does great damage and untold harm, but it does not mean that a marriage must end, as sexual intimacy does not make or break a marriage by itself. We believe that reconciliation and restoration, where possible, is the most desired result for a damaged marriage and that every effort should be directed to this end before seeking to sever the relationship. We believe, in the Biblical interests of defending the vulnerable, that temporary non-divorce separation may be necessary where abuse is present in a marriage.

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that the supreme task of every believer is to glorify God in life and conduct as a testimony to God's saving grace, and to be blameless before the world. Each Christian should seek to be a growing disciple of Jesus Christ and a faithful steward of all possessions, and should seek to realise in every area of life the full stature of maturity in Christ.

LAST THINGS

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will personally come again to receive his Church to Himself and that He will come in power and glory to establish His millennial kingdom. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and lost, and that Jesus Christ will judge both the living and the dead. We believe that the saved will live with Christ eternally in heaven while those who have rejected Christ will be condemned to eternal punishment in Hell.

We believe that there is a distinct order of future events taught in Scripture: that the believers will be taken up first to meet Jesus Christ in what is known as "the Rapture" and that this will be closely followed by the tribulation; seven years of unprecedented war and terror. We believe that Jesus Christ will then suddenly appear, bring an end to the great tribulation and usher in a 1,000 year theocracy, during which time Satan will be confined and Israel restored to her Messiah. We believe that this will end when Satan is set free and many will choose to reject God. Immediately after this will come a time of judgement when all whose names are not already in the "Book of Life" will be consigned to spend eternity in Hell. Those whose names are written in the "Book of Life" will enjoy eternity with God in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

CONCLUSION

We recognise that other believers hold various interpretations on the aforementioned points. We consider it necessary to state that those worshipping and serving with us should be aware of our beliefs and humbly respect them. While we would ask that this involves refraining from publicly teaching anything to the contrary we admit our need to continually learn and grow. We therefore welcome private discussion in any of these areas as long as it is carried out in a spirit of love and peace.