

# Church Covenant & Statement of Beliefs

Throughout this document numerous references are made to “man”, “him”, or “he” to represent mankind and not a particular gender. However, only males are eligible for ordination to serve as pastors within Valley Life Church.

## 1. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God’s gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

B. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life.

C. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final state of believers with a new and imperishable body.

## 2. Scripture

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired by God and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter, and is inerrant in its original text. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

## 3. God/Trinity

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as a Trinity of persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

## B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal, one and only Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples and many others as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person He accomplishes the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6- 21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1- 8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7- 9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

## C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to Jesus Christ as Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. He dwells in all believers and His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26- 27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

## 4. Man

Man was created by God in His image and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by His Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby all men inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. The penalty of man's sin is separation from God in an eternal place of torment called hell. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

## 5. God's Purpose of Grace

God chose to bestow grace (unmerited favor) to believers by which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. All true believers endure to the end. Those who have accepted Christ, and are sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4- 23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## 6. Baptism & the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

## 7. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

## 8. Holy Matrimony

Members of Valley Life Church believe that the covenant of marriage is defined by God to be the union of one biological man and one biological woman at a time. The institution of marriage was given to man by God and cannot be changed. This truth is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments. In light of this belief, we will not knowingly allow our facility or staff to be party to an event that is in opposition to our beliefs.

The institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman predates government and was created by God for one man and one woman. This unchangeable truth is reflected in the Creation story itself.

Genesis 2:18-24 (HCSB)

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement." So the Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found as his complement. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the Lord God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

The institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is also reflected by the very words of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Matthew 19:4-6 (HCSB)

"Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female," and He also said: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."

The New Testament further reflects the institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman in Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 5:28-31 (HCSB)

In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, since we are members of His body. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

## **9. Gender Identity**

We believe that the very image of God is reflected in every one of His human creations. No other created being is made in the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27 (HCSB)

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.

Our biological sex at birth is an infallible expression of His will (Gen 5:2, Psalm 139:13-14, Roman 9:20-21, Mark 10:6). Gender Identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception - a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God's design (Ephesians 4:17-18).

## **10. Sanctity of Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps. 139.)

## **11. Final Church Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. It is the Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Valley Life Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Pastoral Team, Deacons, and Standing Teams give final interpretive authority on the Bible's application.

## **Membership Covenant**

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Ephesians 2) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians. 2:10; 4:12). Valley Life Church holds its membership in high regard; we expect them to lead as witnesses of the gospel to the culture around us. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this community, among these people, at this time for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one part is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezekiel 20:44, 36:22, Ps. 76:11, Hosea 2:19-20; 3:1, 2 Tim. 2:13). The Valley Life Church covenant includes a section on basic doctrine, the obligations of Valley Life Church to its members, and the obligation of members to Valley Life Church. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members of the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to Jesus Christ as a commitment to His glory and His Bride, the church (Ephesians 5:25).

### ***Obligation of Valley Life Church to Its Members***

- We covenant that your pastors and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- We covenant to care for you, seek your growth as a follower of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Ephesians 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly.
- We covenant to come alongside in aiding the family in ministering to children and students (Deuteronomy 6).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the expectations of church members (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12).

### ***My Obligation to Valley Life Church as a Member***

- I covenant to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final authority on all issues (Psalm 119:2; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- I covenant to regularly participate in the life of Valley Life Church by attending weekly worship gatherings, small groups and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- I covenant to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular cheerful and voluntary financial giving, serving and participating in a community that is sacrificial (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- I covenant to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and the practices of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- I covenant to join in the mission of God at work in the church through making disciples: first in my own home, second in my community, and third around the world (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8).
- I covenant to refrain from illegal drug use, abuse of legal drugs, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18, James 3:31-8).
- I hereby understand and submit unto the membership responsibilities and beliefs of Valley Life Church by covenant agreement.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_