

REFORMATION CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

The Reformation Church Membership covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual Members, whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this covenant is to clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the Elders of Reformation Church and the individual Members to the Reformation Church body. In addition, it is intended to serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

Both of these functions are in accordance with the document's overall vision to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Reformation Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

This Membership covenant is comprised of sections on; the nature of covenants, the obligations of Reformation Church Elders to the Reformation Church body, and the obligations of Members to Reformation Church body.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is generally defined as “a written agreement or promise, usually under seal between two or more parties, especially for the performance of some action.” Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants; some are between God and man (Genesis 6, 9, 15; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31; and Matthew 26), while others are solely between men (1 Samuel 18, and 2 Samuel 5). In some covenants one party binds him or herself to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the agreement. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to adhere to the obligations. While God’s covenant with the Church universal is an example of the former, the local church covenant represents the latter. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations. The covenant of Reformation Church contains conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether Members of Reformation Church or elsewhere, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower regardless of any failure on the part of local church to live up to her covenant obligations.

If at any time an individual Member feels as though the church is not remaining faithful to the requirements of Scripture (as expressed in our statement of faith and covenant), it is the responsibility of the individual Member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the Church to assess the validity of those feelings. If the church Elders are truly pursuing unfaithfulness and unwilling to change and pursue covenant fidelity then the Member is encouraged to call a meeting pursuant to Section 7.03 of the Church’s Constitution and Bylaws or, if the Member elects not to call such meeting, he or she is freed from his or her Membership obligations and is encouraged to seek Membership elsewhere given the Church’s disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer Membership elsewhere.

While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her Elders, and her individual Members, the covenant is first and foremost an acknowledgement of general Christian obligations and an agreement to enter into those duties for God's glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

BIBLICAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE ELDERS TO REFORMATION CHURCH BODY

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, Elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the corporate church body and her individual Members. The following is an overview of the requirements for Elders as contained within the Scriptures.

The Elders covenant...

- to nominate Elders and Deacons (including any staff Members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to prayerfully seek God's will for the Reformation Church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to care for Reformation Church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16 Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- to equip the Members of Reformation Church for the work of discipleship and ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
- to lovingly lead Reformation Church in exercising discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of Reformation Church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example and join Members in fulfilling the obligations of church Membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

BIBLICAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS TO REFORMATION CHURCH BODY

Covenant Membership carries with it certain obligations and responsibilities both theological and ethical.

Reformation Church desires to be a people who exult in and exalt the glory of biblical truth. Everything we do and hope to be is tethered to our treasuring of truth. It is the foundation and framework of each and every sermon, class, community group and anything else we do. Rather than diluting truth, we want to revel in it and feast upon it.

As Members, we affirm the following foundational truths.

I affirm:

- the Scriptures are inspired, inerrant, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)
- there is only one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6)
- all things exist for the glory of God who is absolutely sovereign and good (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1; Revelation 4:11).
- all humanity—Christ excluded—is sinful by natural descent and willful action (Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 3:9-18; Romans 5:12-19).
- the deserved penalty for sin is physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; John 3:18).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (John 1:1-3; 1:14; Luke 1:34-35; Colossians 1:15-20).
- Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:14).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).
- there will be a future physical resurrection of the dead (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Luke 14:14; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).
- those who turn from sin and to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal reward while those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 3:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:9).
- only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 17:30; Ephesians 2:8-9).

For a more comprehensive consideration of our beliefs, please consult our Statement of Faith which is attached hereto as Appendix A.

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The requirements of this Membership covenant are in no way intended as exhaustive list of, or an addition to, the biblical obligations of a believer. All believers are called to each of these responsibilities as Members of the Church universal. This covenant simply expresses the hope and desire to submit to the Word of God and pursue faithfulness to these biblical expectations within this particular local church.

By God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, I covenant...

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and the practice of other such spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to follow the command of Christ by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:

- o by being baptized (though Reformation believes and teaches that baptism should be applied by immersion to believers only, we have not made the mode or timing of baptism prerequisite to Membership. Those who were baptized as infants may be accepted into Membership at the discretion of the Elders assuming those prospective Members agree to not be divisive or teach contrary to our position)
 - o by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion.
- to regularly participate in the life of Reformation Church by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community, and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to steward the resources God has given, including time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death, while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:
 - o I will practice complete sexual abstinence unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Abstinence and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
 - o I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to invite the pastors into any major marital conflict, especially involving conversations of abuse, adultery, or potential divorce or separation (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6).
 - o I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip, divisiveness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).
- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
 - o following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another -- the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
 - o receiving righteous and loving discipline when confronted by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- to do the following when I sin (such sin includes, but is not limited to, falling short of the requirements of these covenants which I acknowledge cannot be perfectly followed):
 - o confess my sin to God and to others as the occasion or circumstances require.

- o repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- to submit to the Elders and other appointed leaders of the church and will be diligent to strive for unity and peace within the Church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).
- to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
 - o to notify the leadership of the church
 - o to seek another like-minded church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer

Having read this covenant and the statement of faith, I do hereby desire to enter into covenant Membership with Reformation Church.

Signature

Date

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APPENDIX A

Article IV - Statement of Faith

Having the primary mission to glorify God by making disciples of all nations, the Church must conduct all that it does in light of the following doctrinal affirmations:

4.01 THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the biblical canon consists of 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament (“Scriptures”). These sacred Scriptures are the very words of God, and each and every word is fully inspired by the Spirit. Therefore, it is the authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient self-disclosure of God to mankind. It is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction progressively revealing the kingdom of God made manifest in Jesus Christ. As originally revealed and recorded, the Bible is infallible in all it teaches although our interpretation may be fallible. Therefore, each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent submission. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures individually and in community, and to diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are wholly sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation (whether of creed, confession, or theology) must be subjected to the greater and ultimate authority of the full counsel of God found in Holy Scripture.

Psalm 19, 119; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

4.02 THE TRUE AND TRIUNE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God: all powerful, all knowing, ever present, loving, and good—Creator of heaven and earth. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal yet distinct persons with distinct roles and responsibilities. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is not the Father, yet each is truly God and fully deserving of worship and adoration. In the divine unity, there is glorious diversity and so a blessed mystery for the Church to behold; one triune God—Father, Son and Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; Isaiah 45:18-23

4.03 GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, created the heavens and the earth through the Son and by the Spirit. For His glory, He freely created the world out of nothing. Through His word, He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only Sovereign. His eternal plans and purposes cannot be ultimately thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him and, in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind’s redemption. He made all things

for the praise of His glory and intends for man, in particular, to live in faithful and joyful fellowship with Himself.

Genesis 1:1-31; Romans 8:1-39; Acts 17:24-28

4.04 JESUS CHRIST, GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God and the second person of the Trinity, is the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin. He is perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is one person with two distinct natures—fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him all things hold together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, and in Him dwells all the fullness of God.

He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on the cross. By His death, He revealed divine love, upheld divine justice, and conquered the enemies of the kingdom (namely Satan, sin and death), removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, on the third day, He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness. Afterwards, He appeared to over 500 witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as King and Lord over all, awaiting His return. He is the Head of the Church and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

John 1:1-3, 10:27-33, 20:26-28; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 1:1-14

4.05 GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life and third person of the Trinity, brings order to creation and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He compels men to repent of their sins, confess Jesus as Lord, and trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored and worshiped as God.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. He desires to continually fill each believer with power to bear witness to the gospel and imparts His gifts for the edification of the body and the work of ministry in the world. The healthy exercise of diverse gifts within a unified body is essential to the mission of the Church in the world today.

1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 2 Timothy 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; Hebrews 10:15-17; John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-14

4.06 MANKIND

We believe that God made man—male and female—in His own image, as the crown of creation so that man might glorify Him by enjoying Him forever. He was created in holiness; but by temptation and voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state into rebellion against his Creator. Consequently, all are now sinners. By both nature and willful choice we are utterly void of the righteousness required by God, enslaved to evil and totally depraved. This depravity is radical and pervasive, extending to our mind, will, and affections. Apart from divine grace by the Holy Spirit, we remain wholly unwilling and unable to repent and return to God and therefore justly without hope, defense, or excuse apart from the gospel.

Though marred by the Fall, mankind still retains the image of God and therefore possesses intrinsic value, dignity, and dominion over creation. Thus, human dignity is not dependent on age, mental capacity, developmental stage, health, race, or gender.

Genesis 3:1-7; Jeremiah 2:12-13; Romans 1:18-25; Romans 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1-3

4.07 THE GOSPEL

We believe that the gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God made manifest in His Son. The kingdom is the foundation of the overarching storyline of Scripture from creation to consummation as God redeems a people unto Himself. This good news was inaugurated in the incarnation, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. At the center of the story is the crucifixion, which is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice, appeases His holy wrath, and shames and defeats His enemies. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God as a result of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our homes, work, church, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the gospel.

Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 1:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3; Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-15

4.08 SALVATION AND UNION WITH CHRIST

We believe that salvation is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is united with Christ. This union with Christ is the fountainhead from which all other blessings in the Christian life flow. The believer is justified as the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to him. He is regenerated to life, reconciled to God, and adopted by the Father to become His child. He is freely, fully, and forever forgiven the debt of his sin. He is liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

John 3:1-21; Romans 3:21-26, 5:1-21, 6:1-11; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:8-10

4.09 THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all who will repent. It is the

immediate duty of all to accept the gospel by a humble, penitent, and obedient faith: but, all naturally resist and reject this duty apart from the effectual call of God.

To be saved, sinners must be regenerated (i.e. “born again”). Regeneration consists of being granted a new nature by the power of the Spirit in accordance with the proclaimed word, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of genuine, yet imperfect, repentance and faith.

Repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with authentic contrition, confession, and request for mercy; at the same time, we heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and rely on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

This response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory.

John 3:1-21; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 8:7-8; 1 John 2:3-6

4.10 GOD’S PURPOSE OF ELECTING GRACE

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and saves sinners solely on the basis of His will and not the decision of man. Mankind truly responds to the gospel, but only as an effect of the gracious cause of God’s elective decree, who ordains both the end and the means of redemption. This work of the divine will is a most glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable—and it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, and trust in God.

John 6:35-51; Romans 9:1-24; Ephesians 1:3-14

4.11 SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process through which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness and conformed to the image of His Son. Sanctification is a progressive work begun in regeneration and carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, through the continual use of His appointed means of grace—especially, the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, worship, community, ordinances, and prayer.

John 17:15-19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:2-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:14

4.12 THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe that Christ preserves those whom He calls such that He loses none of those

given to Him by the Father. Therefore, only and all real believers endure unto the end as their persevering is the grand mark which distinguishes genuine faith from hypocrisy. Furthermore, a special providence watches over the welfare of the elect and they are kept by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith unto salvation.

John 6:38-40, 10:27-29; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 John 2:19

4.13 THE CHURCH

We believe that God, by His Word and Spirit, created the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a business, building, or denomination, but instead an assembly of all who have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to glorify God through worship and faithful service to do His will on earth. The ultimate mission of the Church is the glory of God, and the means by which this is accomplished is the making of disciples through the preaching and embracing of the gospel. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached, churches planted, and righteousness reigning to the ends of the earth as the people of God push back the darkness of the world.

All members of the Church are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context, they are called to walk as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom. The ascended Christ has given the enduring offices of Elders and deacons for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. Elders are qualified men charged to shepherd the church in oversight and teaching while deacons are qualified servants who help with the physical administration of the ministry of the body. All members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of the ministry. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and oversight and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world.

Matthew 5:14-15; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:14-15

4.14 ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

We believe that Christ has left two enduring ordinances for His people: baptism and communion.

The ordinance of baptism is the immersion in water of a confessing believer, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. The one-time act of being immersed in water as a believer represents our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, as well as our lifelong union with Christ and each other. As such, it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper.¹

¹ Though the Church believes and teaches that baptism should be applied by immersion to believers only, we have not made the mode or timing of baptism prerequisite to membership. Those who were "baptized" as infants may be

The ordinance of communion is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ and have been baptized into His death and resurrection. This ordinance represents the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, signify our unity with other members of Christ's body, and mysteriously commune together with Christ Himself.

Matthew 26:26-30, 28:18-20; Acts 22:14-16; Romans 6:1-5; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34, 1 Peter 3:20-21

4.15 SEXUALITY AND THE FAMILY

We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society and image of the glorious reality of the spiritual family of the Church. At the same time, we fully affirm the value and calling of those with the gift of singleness (whether lifelong or not) as a blessing to the ministry and mission of the kingdom. At the heart of the family is the sacred union of marriage. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman as defined by creation and biblical revelation. Such union involves a lifelong covenant for the purposes of intimate companionship, sexual expression, joy, and procreation of the human race. The marriage relationship mirrors the relationship between Christ and His Church, and thus any perversion of that picture obscures the glory of God displayed in the gospel. This meaning of marriage and sexuality is, thus, incompatible with homosexuality, transgenderism, polygamy, gender-fluidity, adultery, unbiblical divorce, fornication, pornography, or any other distortion of the consistent teaching of Scripture as affirmed by the unanimous and long-standing tradition of the Church.

Though equal in essence, value, and dignity, men and women have unique and different roles and responsibilities even as Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in glory and, yet, distinct in role. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and provide for, protect, and lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband—even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ and has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to teach their children biblical truth (including spiritual and moral principles) and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to know and love Jesus Christ. Children are to honor and obey their parents as their God-appointed authority.

Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7, Deuteronomy 6:4-9

4.16 CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that Civil Government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed—except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the King of the kings of the earth. Though our ultimate hope is not in governmental policies or politics, Christians have an ethical responsibility, to the extent that they are able, to promote and practice biblical justice and morality to and within a lost and dying world.

Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-25; Jeremiah 29:4-7

4.17 THE RETURN AND ETERNITY

The consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection of the dead, the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, will be finally, fully, and forever separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal conscious punishment; but, the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever, serving and giving Him unending praise and glory, and receiving unending joy. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

Isaiah 65:17-25; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-6, 22:1-5

4.18 CHANGES TO THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

Changes can only be made to the Statement of Faith by the unanimous approval of the Elders (as defined in Section 8.02 below) and upon the vote of approval by at least three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the Members (as defined in Section 5.01 below) present at the relevant meeting.