



Basis of Faith

Grace Church Brighton is a member of both the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) and the Association of Grace Baptist Churches South East (AGBCSE). So we hold to both the following Statements of Faith. Statement 2 clarifies our distinctives as a church.

Statement of Faith 1: The Doctrinal Basis of the FIEC

1. There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

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Statement of Faith 1 contd.

6. The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission

7. The universal church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Statement of Faith 2: The Doctrinal Statement of the AGBCSE

What we believe about God

1. We believe in the one true and living God, co-equal in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is invisible, personal, omnipresent, eternal, dependent on none, unchanging, truthful, trustworthy, almighty, sovereign, omniscient, righteous, holy, good, loving, merciful, long-suffering and gracious, the Creator of all things. (Gen 1; Deut 32; 1 Tim 1:17; Rom 9; Matt 3)

What we believe about the Bible

2. We believe that Almighty God in His great goodness has revealed all that is necessary to life and salvation in the sixty-six books of The Old and New Testaments which is the Word of God. All Scripture was given by inspiration of God, is infallible and inerrant, and is sufficient in all matters of faith and practice. Its authority is derived from its Author and not from the opinions of men. (Ps 19; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 2 Pet 1:16-21)

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Statement of Faith 2 contd.

What we believe about humankind

3. We believe that God created mankind in his image, male and female, and therefore each person has dignity and worth. We believe that marriage is the voluntary, lifelong, exclusive public union of one man and one woman, and is the only God-ordained context for sexual activity.

4. We believe that God made our first father Adam perfect, holy and upright. Adam sinned and as the representative and head of the human race brought upon himself and all his offspring death, condemnation and a sinful nature. As a result it is utterly beyond the power of fallen mankind to have a saving knowledge of God, to love God, to keep his laws, to believe the Gospel, to repent of sin or trust in Christ. (Gen 1-3; Rom 3,5; Eph 2)

What we believe about salvation

5. We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for His own glory chose an innumerable host of men and women to eternal life as an act of free and sovereign grace. This election was in no way dependent upon his foresight of human faith, decision, works or merit. (John 17; Rom 9; Eph 1-2)

6. We believe that God so loved lost sinners that He sent His Son into the world, conceived of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, unchangeably sinless, both God and man, born under the Law to live a perfect life. (Luke 1:26-38; Rom 5; Heb 9)

7. We believe that God's Son died at Calvary to effect propitiation, reconciliation, redemption and atonement for His elect people. God bore testimony to His acceptance of His Son's work by raising Him from the dead for our justification. He ascended to the right hand of His Father and is enthroned in glory, where He intercedes on behalf of His people and rules over all things for their sake. (Matt 27,28; Acts 1; Acts 2:14-41; Rom 3; Heb 9; 1Jn 2:1-2)

8. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to judge all people, to raise the dead, both righteous and unrighteous, and that the righteous shall be glorified and enjoy everlasting life and the wicked endure everlasting punishment. (Jn 14:1-3; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 1:5-12)

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Statement of Faith 2 contd.

9. We believe that the Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation. By the mystery of His all-powerful work those dead in sin are brought into spiritual life. They hear the call of God through His Word and are given the desire and ability to repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission. (Jn 14:25-31; Acts 2; Gal 5:16-26)

10. We believe that the elect, who are called by grace, are justified in the sight of God on account of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ which is received by faith alone. They shall persevere in holiness and enter into the joys of heaven. (John 10; Romans 8)

What we believe about the local church

11. We believe that a visible local church is a community of baptised believers who have covenanted together in the fellowship of the gospel and under the discipline of God's Word. We believe in the necessity of baptism by immersion, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, on a profession of repentance and faith in order to enter into church membership. The Lord's Supper is a privilege of local church membership and is administered under the discipline and pastoral care of the local church. (Matt 18:15-20; Acts 2:37-47; 1 Cor 11:17-34; Eph 4)

12. We believe that the local church is under the authority of Christ alone. A local church is administered by the officers (pastors/elders and deacons) of that church. Under the congregational principle of church order, church members gather to seek the Lord's mind on matters relating to church life and ministry. Local churches express the unity of the body of Christ with other churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel. (1 Cor 1:1-3; Galatians 1; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Rev 2-3)

13. We believe in church based mission – that it is the responsibility and privilege of each local church to be obedient to Christ's Commission to go into all the world, starting in its local area, and preach the gospel to all people, seeking to disciple and baptise believers, establishing them in local churches. (Matt 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2:41-47; Rom 15:20-21)