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## **MY CORE BELIEFS**

**God-** God is one, eternally and simultaneously existing in three equal but separate persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Scriptures-** the Bible (39 books of Hebrew Scriptures and 27 books of New Testament) is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in right relationships with God and man (2 Timothy 3:16). These scriptures are the stories, poems, letters, and descriptions about God and how He relates with mankind. They were written by real people in a real time in history and are relevant for our lives today.

**Jesus-** Jesus is God's son who eternally exists in relationship to the Father. He became flesh and walked on earth in fulfillment of prophecies regarding the Messiah found in the Hebrew Scriptures (He is fully God and fully man). Jesus gave us a perfect example of how to live as we join with God in restoring relationships and reclaiming God's kingdom principles on earth. Jesus left a perfect example of how His followers must live. Love, forgiveness, compassion, understanding, grace, and justice are adjectives that should describe all Christians and churches. His death and resurrection affirms His deity, it gives us hope for today, and it provides for our eternal future. Accepting the forgiveness of Jesus and confessing Him as Lord leads to God's free gift of salvation. Salvation is found in no other name than Jesus.

**Holy Spirit-** The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity and works to direct and lead our lives. The Spirit helps us recognize our own shortcomings and need for God's reconciliation in our lives. The Holy Spirit works to empower us to live out the gospel in our everyday lives.

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**Church-** The Church refers to the universal body of Christ that includes all those who choose to follow Jesus. The Church is God's plan for bringing restoration and renewal to the whole earth.. The original use of the word church (ἐκκλησία) literally refers to an assembly that is loyal to Christ. Our local gathering is one expression among thousands throughout the world and is not better than others, it simply reflects our unique personalities and passions. The corporate gatherings of the Church and the interaction of the followers of Christ serve as a glimpse of heaven. The Church must keep Jesus as the central focus of study and mission.

**Salvation-** Salvation comes as God's gracious gift to us through our faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). God desires that none should perish and that all people have the opportunity to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). God is the final judge in regards to salvation and has full ability to save whomever he chooses.

**Eternity-** There is an eternal existence after this life on earth. Those who are saved by God's grace will spend eternity with God where there will be no more separation that comes as a result of our own sin.

**Sin-** Literally speaking, sin is the biblical description for not living up to God's holiness. Our lack of holiness is what separates us from our Holy God. All sin can be forgiven through God's unconditional gift of forgiveness.

### **MY CORE VALUES**

**Authenticity-** Being real must be the DNA of the church. This includes being honest about shortcomings, fears, sins, and feelings.

**Outward-** Relationships with the community on personal and corporate levels are pursued with no ulterior motive. Motivation is to be God's love to the world.

**Organic-** Ministries and people are nurtured and grown from God given desires and are not manufactured. People take priority over program.

**Holistic-** The gospel of Jesus affects all areas of life and is good news for the whole world. There should be no separation of followers "Spiritual" life and "everyday" life.

**Missional-** The church exists to be a blessing to the world in all of our relationships and in all areas. Our purpose is to live outside of the walls of church.

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**Experiential-** Worship requires participation. The church is not here to entertain, but to encourage and enable each person to express worship through a variety of ways. Following Christ is an experience that takes place all the time and everywhere.

**Community-** Relationships are essential. Celebrating God's love, wrestling with issues of faith, walking through difficult times, rejoicing in good times, serving each other, and learning from the insights and wisdom of each other are some characteristics of a healthy church.

**Connection-** As modern Christians, we are connected with an ancient family of people who have sought God and worked out what it means to follow and live as God desires. We are also connected with other believers across the earth. Our culture and form of expression is one of many Christian cultures seeking to know and love God.

**Diversity-** The Body of Christ is diverse so local gatherings should reflect that diversity. This includes diversity within giftedness, life experiences, ethnicity, generations, and socio-economics. All of these differences come together under one purpose to love God and love others.

**Servant hood-** The leadership of the church must model a "bottom up" instead of "top down" form of leadership. Leaders exist to empower, train, and motivate others to excel and succeed in ministry. The result should be a focus on Christ and not a few select members of leadership.

**SOME THINGS A CHURCH SHOULD DO**

Teach scripture with an emphasis of connecting the ancient truths with modern life.

Use a variety of techniques and venues to communicate these truths to a diverse group of people.

Create a culture of free and expressive worship. Some people worship quietly and introspectively, while others enjoy more celebratory approaches. Churches can create an atmosphere that allows freedom of expression through education, modeling, and by offering options during worship times.

Focus on relationships. Offer small groups that encourage people to share life together. Also encourage and model a lifestyle that builds relationships everywhere. If an entire community of believers intentionally builds positive relationships with neighbors, with local merchants and public figures, with educators, and co-workers, the congregation will be on the path that Jesus modeled for us.

Actively serve the marginalized of society. Serving the poor, loving orphans (or foster children), visiting prisoners or families of prisoners, being with the elderly, and welcoming the handicapped are just some things the church should actively and intentionally do.

Send people throughout the world with the message of God's love and forgiveness.

Constantly commit to learning. Learning about God and the truths of scripture, learning about culture and new ideas, and learning about people all contribute to relevant and effective ministries.

Have fun as a church. The creator of the universe loves us and accepts us. We need to be able to laugh at ourselves and enjoy our time together. Jesus lived with a range of emotions and we should allow and encourage that same range.

Pray together, seek God's will together, and hold our plans with an open heart and mind. Be willing to change.

Have art, music, drama, writing, speaking, specific trades and hobbies be seen and used everywhere. We create with our unique passions because we are in the image of God (the creator).

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