



## Statement of Faith

Enacted by a Resolution passed by ninety percent (90%) of the Elders – February 2019

Sanctioned by an affirmative vote of the Members present in person at a Meeting of Members on March 3, 2019

# Morningstar Christian Fellowship

## Statement of Faith

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### I. We Respond to God's Revealed Truth:

#### ***The Biblical Revelation:***

We believe that God inspired the Holy Scriptures of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16) in order to reveal to us the truth of his person, his salvation in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, and life with him in spirit and truth. As God's inspired Word, the Bible is:

- **Complete:** the entire collection of books (i.e. "canon") of Scripture, gathered in both the Old and New Testaments, is inspired by God. As a complete work of God, the Old Testament and its promises are fulfilled by the New Testament.
- **Inerrant:** God moved the Old Testament and New Testament writers by the Holy Spirit to produce the Bible. So, it is inerrant—without error-- in its original manuscript form.
- **Authoritative:** And, because it is God himself who speaks, the Bible is indeed the "Word of God" and carries a spiritual authority which must be obeyed. In the Bible, God reveals to us his "will" and guides our rightful response to him in both "faith" and "practice."
- **Exclusively Sufficient for life and salvation:** Because God is "spirit" and his realm of "spirit" is unseen, we must rely only on the direct revelation of His Word to understand by "faith" what cannot be empirically or rationally understood (Hebrews 11:1). Thus, any religious or theological attempt to understand God and spiritual reality apart from God's Word is doomed to fail. But, God's Word is sufficient for all to come to God and Jesus Christ for life and salvation (John 5:39-40).

Joshua 1:8, Matthew 5:17,18; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19.

#### ***The Created Order: Seen and Unseen***

We believe that God created the heaven and the earth in six literal days (Exodus 20:11) to be "good"—that is, to be life-giving and sustaining, infused with the light of his glorious presence.

- **Creation:** In the Bible, God reveals to us that he is the Creator of both the heavens and the earth. As Creator, he is Lord over the earth, that is, the earthly and empirically known realm, and heaven, the spiritual realm known only by faith. Over both these realms, God has appointed as rightful "Head" his Son Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15).
- **Man:** Into this perfect creation of heaven and earth, God created and placed man as a creature "alive" with God's spiritual life (Genesis 2:7) and designed to know and glorify God as his "image"-bearer (Genesis 1:26). God blessed man with abundant and fruitful life, giving him the birthright to multiply, fill, and rule over God's creation.

Recognizing that God alone is the Creator and giver of human life, we affirm that it is God's right rather than the right of individuals, to prematurely or capriciously end life

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before its God-determined course (Genesis 2:7). Indeed, God explicitly commands individuals not to “murder” (Exodus 20:13) and that bloodshed deserves an equal punishment due to the sanctity of human life as God’s image-bearers (Genesis 9:6). Therefore, we oppose all forms of capricious bloodshed, whether it be the life of unborn children (e.g. abortion, eugenic screening, or fetal research), self-harm (e.g. suicide), or even end-of-life termination (e.g. assisted suicide or euthanasia).

According to his perfect will and plan, God created human beings in only two genders: biologically-born and unalterably (i.e. cisgendered) male and biologically born and unalterably (i.e. cisgendered) female. Together, males and females glorify God by bearing his image and reflecting his “oneness” by being joined together in marriage.

Genesis 1:27, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:10-28, 5:12-19, Ephesians 2:1-3, Revelation 20:11-15.

- **A Fallen Creation:** Originally, our first ancestors were spiritually alive, knowing God in a face-to-face relationship. However, their decision to live apart from God and determine “good and evil” by themselves was the sin which led to their spiritual death. As a result, sin enslaved all God’s creation in futility and spiritual darkness and all human beings to spiritual death and the eternal condemnation and wrath of God.

Thus, while this world still bears traces of God’s goodness as the Creator, the observable reality belies an unseen spiritual death and darkness, a realm ruled by Satan.

- **Fallen Flesh:** When human beings chose to live life apart from God, they died spiritually. That is, they lost the life-giving relationship with God which was eternal life (John 17:3). Separated from God in their sinfulness, all that remained was their “flesh”— the futile and earth-bound life of material existence without God. And, rejecting God’s care, they were ruled by Satan and enticed by the world and its lusts. When we live in the “flesh,” that is, with the mindset to live as if God does not exist or is not relevant, to live a life independent of God, we cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8). Such a flesh-based or humanistic intention is inevitably “hostile” to God, lawless, and set on establishing self-made or religious works (Colossians 2:23; Romans 10:2-4).

In order to teach humanity the reality of their sin and need for forgiveness, God gave his commandments to the nation of Israel (Exodus 20:1-17) for the purpose of revealing sin and their need for a Redeemer (Romans 7:7). Sadly, Israel did not submit to God’s plan but sought to establish her own way to righteousness (Romans 10:3), resulting in their rejecting of Jesus Christ in favor of “self-made” religion. Thus, the Law of God should point us to Christ in faith, serving as a mirror to uncover our sinful failings and our need

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for redemption.

*Genesis 2:17, 3:6-7; Romans 5:12; Romans 8:22; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:26; 1 John 2:15-17;*

### ***Our Spiritual Condition and Need for God's Salvation:***

We believe that God reveals Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, as the only means of salvation. As our Redeemer, Jesus Christ restores to us eternal life with God as sons by freeing us from the debt of sin and imputing us with an eternal righteousness. Jesus Christ saves us spiritually by giving us a new birth in the Holy Spirit (**regeneration**; Titus 3); relationally by bringing us near to God as sons (**sanctification** and **adoption**; Hebrews 4:13; Galatians 4:5); positionally by forgiving us of our sins and considering us blameless (Romans 8:30; **justification**); and relationally by lavishing on us his gifts and authority within the family (Romans 8:30; **glorification**).

- **Christ the Redeemer:** As God's chosen "Christ" (Isaiah 9:2-7), Jesus was both the Son of David and the Son of God (2 Samuel 7:12, 14). He secured the "right" of redemption by living a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; Mark 1:13) and paid for the "ransom" of redemption by dying on the cross (Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24-25), by which he atoned for the sins of his people (2 Samuel 7:14; c.f. Isaiah 53:5-6). After he suffered, died, and was buried, he rose from the dead on the third day to intercede for his family as the Lord of all (Romans 5:10; Romans 8:34).
- **Our Redemption:** When we were spiritually enslaved to Satan and his realm of darkness, God revealed his Son to us in the preaching of the gospel, so that we who would repent, believe, and receive Jesus Christ would become rightful, Holy Spirit-born sons of God (John 1:12-13); forgiven of sins and justified before God (Romans 3:24); and adopted with full rights into God's family. Clearly, Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer to accomplish such a great work of salvation (Romans 3:23-25), succeeding where every other work, philosophy, or self-made religion is doomed to fail.
- **Redeemed Family of Christ:** Having been redeemed, we who were once far off have now become members of God's own household (Ephesians 2:19). As the Head of our Family, Jesus Christ calls us to live together as God's family in love and unity (John 15:13, John 17:11).

In God's household, both Jew and non-Jews are reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13-15). Indeed, a partial hardening of Israel has allowed the gospel to come to all Gentiles (Romans 11:25), but the promise remains that in the latter days, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26; Zechariah 12:10).

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- **Redemptive Kingdom of Christ:** Jesus redeems a family through which he establishes and rules over an eternal kingdom of peace (2 Samuel 7:13, 16). Thus, God's redemption begins with his family of redeemed children and wins back all of creation so that God will finally be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

John 3:16, 10:28-29, Acts 4:12, 13:39, Romans 3:20, 5:1, 8:14-16, 29-30, Ephesians 2:8-9, I Timothy 2:5, II Peter 1:4, I John 3:1-3.

## II. We Obey God our Father and Christ our Lord:

### ***The True and Triune God***

We believe in the One True God. There is no other God but the God revealed in the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Matthew 22:32). As the living and true God, God is "holy" — distinct and exalted from all of his creation, both seen and unseen (Isaiah 6:3). As the Holy God, God is exalted and holy in all respects, as he is: infinite, eternal, powerful, and sovereign. He is the Creator, Ruler, and Sustainer of all things.

Yet, God is also "personal" and can be known in a personal relationship. As "spirit," God exists and knows in a limitless way (John 4:24). He exists and acts as "One God," but this oneness is a perfect and loving unity of the Godhead living as a Trinity of three persons sharing one name (Matthew 28:19), one love (John 17:24), and one glorious image (Genesis 1:26). Acting as one yet distinct in role and office, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work to create, sustain, and redeem all things in heaven and on earth (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:1-3).

Exodus 20:2,3, Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:18-20, I Corinthians 8:6, I Timothy 6:16, Jude 24,25.

### ***Jesus Christ, the Son of God***

We believe that as the Triune Godhead, the Father loves Jesus, the Son of God, and gives all things into his hand (John 3:35). Thus, it is the Father's will to establish Jesus as:

- The **Heir and Head** of all things as **the Son of God**: God creates all things in heaven and on earth "through" and "for" Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, so that he might be the preeminent head over all creation and the head over God's family, the church (Colossians 1:15);
- The **Christ**: Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, being fully God and fully man. He was born in this way to fulfill God's promise and mission as the "Christ" to build a family for God's name (i.e. "house") which would allow him to establish and rule over a "kingdom" forever (2 Samuel 7:12-17). To save the children of God for life in this family, Jesus Christ led a sinless life, died on the cross to atone for their sins, and rose again from the dead. Ascending to heaven, he is seated at the right

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hand of the Father to intercede for his people.

- **Lord** of heaven and earth: Having atoned for the sins of his people by his death on the cross then rising from the dead, Jesus Christ has received from God all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), having been made Lord of all (Acts 2:36). As Lord, Jesus Christ rules at the Father's side as the Head of God's House and the King of God's Kingdom; until the day when he brings all rule and authority under subjection to his throne, as every knee bows and every tongue confesses Jesus Christ as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).

Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, 24:30, 28:6, John 1:1-3, 14:3, Acts 1:3,11, Romans 14:17, I Corinthians 15:3,4, II Corinthians 5:21, I Thessalonians 1:9,10, Hebrews 7:25, I Peter 2:22-24, 3:10, Revelation 1:8.

### ***The Holy Spirit***

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who is fully God as a member of the Trinity. Jesus sends him to accomplish the spiritual work of salvation for every believer.

- **Conviction of Sin:** He convinces men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment;
- **Spiritual Rebirth:** The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the Body of Christ at regeneration, sealing and keeping the believer unto the day of redemption;
- **Spiritual Living:** Crucially, the Holy Spirit indwells and sanctifies the believer. He produces the fruit of Christlikeness to the extent of that believer's surrender, and gives gifts for ministry to edify the Body of Christ.

John 3:1-9, John 14:16-17,26, John 16:7-11, I Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 5:22,23, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 4:11-16, Ephesians 5:18, Hebrews 9:14.

## **III. As disciples, we Grow Together in the Church Family of Jesus Christ:**

### ***The Mission of Jesus Christ: Gathering a Church Family to Build a Kingdom***

We believe that Jesus Christ entrusted to his family the redemptive mission of bringing the nations of the world under the saving rule of his Kingdom. This redemptive mission is accomplished as his people live as disciples, growing and reproducing in multiplying church families (Matthew 28:18-20).

- **Disciples:** a disciple responds to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ by obeying his Word (John 8:31), remaining in life-giving connection with him (John 15:8), and following his leadership (Mark 1:17). As disciples know Jesus in deeper ways, they grow spiritually and bear fruit, eventually multiplying themselves as the new life of Jesus spreads to their

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network of family and friends (John 15:7-9).

- **Marriage and Family:** In the family of God, older disciples (elders or shepherds) are responsible for raising up the next generation of younger disciples (Matthew 18:20; 1 Peter 5:1-4). This responsibility starts in each family of disciples, for the parents serve also as the spiritual “elders” of the family, raising up their children to follow Jesus Christ as their personal Lord.

In recent days, the integrity of the family unit as a means of raising up new generations of disciples of Jesus Christ has been jeopardized as non-Biblical definitions of the family have spread. The Scriptures provide us with God’s standards and expectations for the home and the family. Biblically, marriage is defined as a life-long, exclusive heterosexual covenant between one cisgender man and one cisgender woman. According to God’s design, human sexuality is to be expressed and enjoyed as a gift from God within this context. All sexual relationships outside of the heterosexual marital bond (e.g. homosexuality, lesbianism, bi-sexuality, incest, pre-marital and post-marital sexual relations, etc.) are offensive to God and are contrary to His standards. (Genesis 2:23-24; Hebrews 13:4).

Thus, we uphold the family unit of one cisgender male and one cisgender female as the ideal, God-ordained social unit for parenting and raising children. Furthermore, the family unit is God’s fundamental structure for raising up young disciples of Jesus Christ. Because God entrusts children to their parents, these parents are responsible before God to raise their children to know God and Jesus by their example and instruction in the faith. (Deut 6:4-9; Ps 78:5-7; Prov 1.8; 4:1; 8:32; 14:26; 20:7; Joel 1:3; Mal 2:15; Matt 28:18-20, Eph 6:4; et al.)

- **The Church:** In addition to growing disciples in individual family units, the Family of God gathers in home fellowships and Churches meeting at local sites in order to nurture the growth of disciples. In each of these gatherings—individual families, home fellowships, or local site churches—the Church Family lives together under the Headship of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of believers (Acts 2:42-47).

The church universal is comprised of all the redeemed and comes to visible expression in local congregations of believers. The church is called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus, and exists primarily for the worship of God. It also exists for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Christ,

- **Celebrations in the Church Family: Baptisms and the Lord’s Supper.**

As with any family, the Church celebrates the birth of “new life,” which is what is

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proclaimed in the ordinance of “baptism.” Christian baptism is by immersion in water and signifies the believer’s union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. This act of baptism precedes church membership.

Also, the Church Family celebrates the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ whose body and blood were given at the cross in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Before sharing the bread and cup, the members of the Church Family examine themselves carefully and solemnly before the Lord. Then, taking the bread and cup, we remember the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and proclaims his death until he comes again.

Matthew 26:26-29, 28:18-20, Acts 2:41, 8:36-39, Romans 6:3-5, I Corinthians 11:23-32.

- **Meeting as a Church Family on the Lord’s Day:** We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, commemorating Christ’s glorious resurrection from the dead. It is the divinely appointed day for worship and renewal.

Luke 24:1-7, Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 16:1,2, Hebrews 10:25, Revelation 1:10

- **Leading the Church Family:** In every church family, the Lord appoints Elders who will shepherd and care for his people, instructing them to nurture their growth (Jeremiah 3:15). The spiritual leaders of the local church are elders and deacons whose qualifications and duties are defined the epistles of Timothy and Titus.

Matthew 16:18, 28:19,20, Acts 2:41,42, Ephesians 4:1-16, I Timothy 3:1-16, Titus 1:1-2:2, Revelation 2 and 3.

## IV. As a Church Family, We Advance and Anticipate the Coming

### Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ:

We believe that as Churches of disciples multiply locally, regionally, and nationally or internationally, the Kingdom of God advances as new disciples are born into the family of those protected by the rule of Jesus Christ and as local churches witness of Jesus Christ to their communities. This advance of the Kingdom of God will continue until the return of Jesus Christ in the last days.

### ***Satan and Demons: the Kingdom of God Advances despite Spiritual Opposition***

We believe that there is a personal devil who is “the god of this age” and “the prince of the power of the air”, full of all subtlety and deception, continually seeking to frustrate the plans of God and to ensnare the sons of men. He is assisted by a host of demons which the Scriptures identify as fallen angels. Satan and his hosts were defeated in the work of Jesus Christ at the cross which seals their ultimate and eternal doom in the lake of fire.



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II Corinthians 4:4, 11:13,15, Ephesians 2:2, 6:11,12, Colossians 2:13-15, Hebrews 2:14,15, Revelation 12:9, 20:10.

### ***Church and State: Earthly and Heavenly Kingdoms.***

We believe in the separation of church and state, each having a distinct purpose as ordained by God. Thus, the disciple of Jesus Christ has personal responsibilities to each as outlined in Scripture.

Matthew 22:21, Romans 13:1-7, Ephesians 4:11-16, Hebrews 13:7,17, I Peter 2:13-17.

### ***Concerning Civil Government: Earthly and Heavenly Authority.***

We believe that Civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society and that Civil authorities are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed except in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Sovereign over the rulers of the earth.

Matthew 22:21, Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1-7, I Timothy 2:1-2.

### ***The Coming of Jesus Christ and our Eternal State.***

We believe that Jesus Christ will come again and bring salvation to all those who through faith are justified in his name. Those finding redemption by his blood will escape God's great judgment at the end of the age (John 5:24), at which time the dead will be judged for their deeds in the body. Those whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life will be punished with eternal fire, cut off from God's presence (Revelation 20:15). Then, God will create a New Heavens and a New Earth. Together with him, we will spend eternity in full enjoyment of God's presence, sharing His glory.

Psalms 16:1, Matthew 25:46, John 5:24-29, 14:2, 17:23,24, Romans 1:18-20, II Thessalonians 1:6-10, Revelation 20:11-15, 22:1-6.