

Beliefs

God – We believe that there is one true God. He is the Creator of all things who manifests Himself in three distinct persons. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each possess the equal and full attributes of deity. People are God's greatest treasures. He loves humanity and His intentions toward us are good.

In the beginning God created (Genesis 1:1); For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (John 3:16)

- If God does not exist, then humanity has no purpose for life. But, since God does exist, the purpose of humans is to have relationship with God, not as slaves or equals, but as those who are lesser being loved by the Greater.
- If God is not three persons yet one being, then we have polytheism, the belief in multiple gods. It is the relationship within God that is the foundation for love, and the basis for our relationships with God and others. Humans were made to live within community as God is a community.
- If God did not create humans out of love, then the most we could hope for from God is a benevolent dictator. Instead, throughout the Bible we see God as doing everything possible to display love and affection toward humans. The Apostle John says that this is our motivation to love God, because God first loved us. (1 John 4:10, 19)

Jesus – We believe in Jesus Christ and that He is God in human form. He came to show us how to live and teach us of the true nature and purposes of God. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died for the sins of humanity, and was bodily resurrected from the dead.

That whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16); Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28); And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. (1 Corinthians 15:14)

- If Jesus is not God, then God has done nothing to aid us in reconciling our relationship. But, with Jesus being God in human form, we see that God has done everything for reconciliation, even suffering a horrible, human death. God is not a God who created everything and then sat back and watched it unfold with interest but without interference. God stepping into history as Jesus of Nazareth shows that God is intimately involved in what was created, especially in the lives of humans.
- If Jesus was not resurrected, then we can close the doors to this church and to the church as a whole. It would mean that Jesus was not God, and did not die to pay the price for the sin of all humans. To borrow from C.S. Lewis, we cannot say that Jesus was simply a great teacher, teaching us the ways of life. If He was only that, then Jesus was a liar because He declared Himself to be more than that. Jesus declared Himself to be God. Yet, He exhibited no signs of being a lunatic as His teachings were cogent and sane. We do not follow a great teacher, or a prophet; in Jesus we follow the God of the universe who created us and loves us enough to take on humanity and die for us.

The Bible – We believe that the Bible is the accurate accumulation of the thoughts and concepts of God. Although God communicates and interacts with us in different ways, the scripture is the specific, complete and final authority on all matters of the Christian faith.

- It would be a cruel God indeed that created beings and then left them to their own devices, never sharing with them how things were designed to work. This is especially true if, when we do something that is not in line with how things work, we end up suffering negative consequences, even death. God shows goodness by revealing to us through the Bible how things work, specifically, how relationships work; the relationship between humans and creation, humans and each other, and humans and God.
- While there are many religious writings, thoughts, and interpretations, the Bible declares itself to be the word of God, and has shown itself to be such through its wisdom and prophecy. It is complete as far as the written revelation of God is concerned. The Apostle Paul states that *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16).
- If we do not hold the Bible as the only authority on all matters of the Christian faith, then what other authority are we to rely on? What other religious book declares the truth of God, Jesus, and the reconciliation of humanity with God?

Holy Spirit – We believe in the Holy Spirit. He is the active and present work of God in the world today. He works in us to lead us into God's best and He works through us to accomplish God's purposes in our world. He is the presence of God for comfort when we need it and for correction when we get off track.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. (John 15:16); But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26); When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)

- The work of the Holy Spirit shows us that God is concerned with the "here and now" not just the "yet to come." This means that what we do with our life, and in community, is important to God. How humans relate to God and each other is important to the Holy Spirit.
- Everyone in the world has a relationship with God; some adversarial, others reconciled. The Holy Spirit seeks to draw those who are adversarial into the position of reconciled; and those who are reconciled into a deeper relationship with God. While we do not fully understand how the Spirit works, we know that the work is always for the good of humanity.
- God has chosen to use the Holy Spirit to work through those who are reconciled to help draw those who are still in some way adverse to God. The Holy Spirit also guides those who have been reconciled to work together in community to develop a deeper understanding of God's ways and love for them. This is the core of the Reach, Teach and Send philosophy of Woodcrest.

Salvation – The purpose for God revealing himself to modern people through scripture is that people might be reconciled into intimate communion and fellowship with their Creator. Originally created to have fellowship with God, humans rebelled and chose an independent nature that alienated the original man (Adam) and all people after him from God. The price for this rebellion is permanent separation from God — ultimately death. Jesus Christ was given by God to pay the death price for humans, that by receiving Him as their Savior, they might escape the penalty of rebellion and be permanently reconciled to the Father. Salvation is the work of God alone. It is a free gift to all who accept it. The only saving work a person can perform is to repent (turn) from sin and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and follow Him as Lord (Boss).

- This is the heart of the Christian message: we are reconciled to God through God's action in Jesus. It is the Good News (Gospel) that Jesus commanded His followers to tell the world. *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* (Mathew 28:19-20)
- Jesus tells us explicitly that there is no other way to be reconciled to God except through the work of Jesus. *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)
- The Apostle Paul tells us that people cannot believe, or accept Jesus unless they first hear the message. *How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?* (Romans 10:14, 15) This highlights the importance of Reach, Teach, Send, as well as the way the message is presented within the context of weekend services and mid-week ministries.

Baptism- Once you have made a decision for Christ, baptism is the next step. Baptism is the outward demonstration of an internal change. It is not a requirement for salvation, but is our way to tell the world that we have chosen to identify our lives with Christ and commit our futures to Him. It is a public expression of an internal decision to follow Christ. Baptism comes after trusting Christ as forgiver and leader.

- Baptism becomes a non-negotiable action for those who truly grasp and embrace the previous truths. Love for God and all that has been done for them will compel a person to want to express their love for God in tangible, meaningful ways. One of those ways is baptism. *As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"* (Acts 8:36)
- While baptism is a personal expression, it is a corporate celebration and covenant. Those who witness the baptism, especially those in relationship with Jesus, are committing themselves to helping the person along this new path in their journey. This is represented most in our Teach and Send focus. *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.* (John 17:20-21)