

OUR BELIEFS:



GOD

- We believe that the Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures is the one (Deut. 6:4), living (Matt. 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 3:12; Rev. 7:2), sovereign (Job 42:2; Ps. 115:3; Dan. 4:25; Dan. 4:34-35; Eph. 1:11; Jam. 4:15), and all-glorious (Ps. 138:5) God. His glory is totally and completely self-contained in His being and is in no way reliant on affirmation from any other being or phenomenon outside of Himself (1 Chron. 21:11).
- This glorious God is one God, eternally existing as one essence (Is. 44:6; Is. 45:5-6; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5) and three infinitely excellent and awe-inspiring distinct persons (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14): God the Father, the eternally unbegotten source and fountain of all being (1 Cor. 8:6); God the Son, the beloved of God (Matt. 12:18; Jn. 20:31; Jn. 1:1-3; Jn. 5:18), eternally begotten and not made, without beginning (Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:5-6; Jn. 1:14,18; Jn 1:1); and God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds in full divine essence as a person, eternally from the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Rom. 8:27; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:13-14; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:30). Each Person in the Godhead is fully, equally, completely and eternally God and yet there is one God. Each person has precisely the same nature and distinct attributes, making each worthy of precisely the same worship, honour and praise.

HUMANITY:

- We believe that it is the greatest joy of humanity to embrace and revel in the glorious truth that all humans are created in the image of the almighty God and, unlike anything else in creation, can proclaim the status of divine image bearers roaming the Earth to reflect the nature of the God who created us and imbued us with the Imago Dei. All humans belong to the creation order which the Triune God – in His infinite wisdom and brilliance – declared to be very good. We, therefore, proudly and boldly hold to the truth that all human life is sacred and of inestimable worth in all of its dimensions (Gen. 1:26-31, 2:21-24).



THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

- We believe God, in His indescribable kindness and grace to all humanity, chose to reveal Himself to mankind so that it may be possible for us to know Him. We believe that our Triune God gave us the Holy Scriptures, His special revelation, with every one of the 66 books being the perfect word of God spoken through humans as they were “inspired by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). We affirm that the Bible, in its original form, is without error both in part and as a whole (Matt. 5:17-18; Ps. 19:7). As the very word of God, the Bible is the final and supreme authority in all things and it is our greatest joy to seek to submit all of our lives to His loving and perfect guidance for our good and His glory (Josh. 1:7-8). Through His scriptures, our Triune God graciously reveals unto mankind His character, His will for His people, and His wonderful plan for the redemption and recreation of the world. The Holy Scriptures most gloriously reveal the gospel story of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, all of the Scriptures point to and find their fulfilment in Jesus (Lk 24:27). The word of God is sufficient in addressing our need for salvation (Ps 19:7), in equipping the believer for the work of ministry (2 Tim 3:16-17), and in revealing the certainty of our Christian hope when our Lord Jesus Christ will return to make all things new (Rev 21-22).

THE GOSPEL:

- The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ: God become man to enter into the world and display His holiness in His perfect life, His sacrificial and substitutionary death, His miraculous and powerful resurrection and His glorious ascension to reign over all the Earth at the right-hand side of the Father who sent Him (1 Cor. 1:20, 2:14 15:2-3; Rom. 1:16, 3:23-26, 4:24-25; Mk. 16:19). The gospel is a broad term which describes God’s glorious, sovereign plan for human salvation and redemption, which God – in His infinite wisdom – had formulated from before the foundations of the Earth was laid. The gospel may seem like utter folly to the world, but it is indeed the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18).

- God created man to be in perfect union with Him. It was in this joyous union with God that man would find our source of life, satisfaction, fulfilment, meaning and joy. However, sin and rebellion entered into the world and separated all humanity from the ultimate source of life, satisfaction, fulfilment, meaning and joy and from that moment, death entered the world as the just punishment for sin (Gen. 1-3). Humanity, separated from God, has ever since sought to find our source of life, satisfaction, fulfilment, meaning and joy in the world, producing in all of us selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, pride, malice, slander, covetousness, sexual impurity, drunkenness, strife and all forms of human evil. All of us, separated from the source of life, are therefore dead in our trespasses and sins, following the ruler of this world and submitting to the kingdom of the power of the air. It is the spirit of disobedience which is at work in us, and it deems us by nature children of wrath, deserving to be justly punished by the wrath of God against sin and evil for He is Holy and good and must execute justice on the guilty (Eph. 2:1-3).
- But God, being rich in mercy, and because of His great love for us, made us alive with Christ, even while we were still dead in our trespasses and sins – it is by grace we are saved (Eph. 2:4-10). In His grace to us, The Father sent His very own Son, Jesus Christ, to willingly die on a cross on behalf of a broken and sinful world, that He might be a substitutionary sacrifice to God for our sins. The shed blood of Christ on the cross and His death on our behalf satisfies the demands of God's Holy justice and appeases His Holy wrath justly due to sinners for their sin and rebellion. Christ took this punishment onto Himself, having lived the perfect life, He is therefore an appropriate and acceptable atoning sacrifice which God is pleased to accept on behalf of the redeemed (1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10; Rom 3:21-26). Thus, He who knew no sin, became sin that all who believe in Him might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).
- On the third day, Jesus rose from the grave victorious over sin, shame and death and invited all to run to Him that He might place a cloak of righteousness over us, covering up our sins and declaring us justified, Holy, blameless and righteous children of God in whom our Father is well pleased. God is pleased in us, because of what Christ has done on our behalf and never looks to us to justify ourselves (Jn. 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:21; Lk. 24:6-7).
- Jesus then ascends to the heavenly realms at the right hand of the Father where He will reign over all, and He gloriously sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of His people to daily make us more like Jesus, that we might more and more resemble Him in this world. The church, God's people, thus becomes the body of Christ on Earth, commissioned to make disciples of every nation thus pushing darkness back with light by proclaiming this good news that all who hear may have an opportunity to repent, believe and receive salvation (2 Cor. 3:18; Matt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 12:27).

- We now eagerly await the day when Christ will return in glory to make all things right, to reign in perfect unity and peace and to herald in the new heavens and the new earth where all tears will be wiped away, all sin, evil and death put to death once and for all and where we will rejoice in the Lamb on the throne for all eternity! (1 Thess. 5:23; Jam. 5:7; Rev. 22:12).
- We believe that this gospel doctrine must therefore be central to all we do in the life of the church. Our gospel doctrine must shape our gospel culture. Thus, all that God has done to us in the gospel must be lived out through us in our churches and in our everyday lives. We believe that our churches must be spaces in which the love, care, kindness, compassion, justice, truth, tenderness, forgiveness, mercy, rebuke, correction, repentance and welcome of Christ might be experienced in all their glory through one another. To believe the gospel is to be shaped by the gospel, and to be shaped by the gospel is to look more like Jesus. When a church is filled with restored image bearers seeking to reflect Jesus in all they do, gospel culture is born (Rom. 15:7; Matt. 5:14-16; Gal. 5:22-23).

THE CHURCH:

- We believe that the church is the body of Christ, purchased and redeemed by the blood of Christ, daily conformed to the image of Christ by the indwelling of the Spirit that the church might become the very means by which the world is saturated with the presence of Christ as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).
- Through faith in Christ, believers are indwelt and baptised by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19; 12:13), becoming members of His body, the church, which was established by the coming of the promised Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). We believe that the church, cleansed by the blood of Christ and filled with His Spirit, are sent with power to be God's witnesses, called by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to obey all that He commands and following Him as He leads us more and more into joyous union with Him (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-8). The mission given us by God is to proclaim the gospel to every tribe, tongue and nation and gather them into the family of God so they may be equipped along with all the saints to participate in the great commission (Acts. 14:23). The ultimate hope of the mission of the church is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience (Rom. 1:5, 15:8-11; Jn. 4:23). Missions exist because worship doesn't. When the time of ingathering is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions.

ELDERSHIP

- It is the joy of Garden City Church to be overseen by a plurality of Godly, trustworthy, humble, servant-hearted and Christ exalting elders. Elders must meet the biblical qualifications explained in 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders are charged with the humbling privilege to shepherd the flock of God in keeping with 1 Peter 5:1-5. Our elders are committed to shepherding and praying for the members of Garden City Church.
- It is our aspiration and intention to raise up elders from within our body as the Lord permits in His perfect timing. Whilst we are still in the church planting phase, we are overjoyed to have the eldership team of GodFirst East Rand overseeing Garden City Church, holding leadership accountable and ensuring that God is being glorified and His sheep are being cared for in alignment with the scriptures.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- We believe that the Holy Spirit has been at work throughout all eternity, sharing in the work of creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30), awakening faith in the remnant of God's people (Rom. 8:7-9), performing signs and wonders (Jgs. 14:6), giving triumphs in battle (Jgs. 3:10), empowering the preaching of the prophets (1 Sam. 10:6), and inspiring the writing of scripture (2 Pet. 1:21; Matt 22:44; Ps. 110:1).
- We believe that the newness of this era is marked by the unprecedented mission of the Spirit who was sent by the Father to bring attention, adoration, praise, honour and glory to the crucified and risen Christ (John 16:13-14). The Holy Spirit is the "other" paraclete who is present with and in all believers empowering us to comprehend the length, breadth, depth and height of the love of God and thus reflect this love by worshiping, adoring, magnifying and glorifying the Son whose love for us in His life, death and resurrection revealed the nature of the Father (Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:14, 14:16-17).
- We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are so beautifully and vividly put on display in the New Testament, are still alive and active in the present-day church and will be so until the return of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:1-11). The Holy Spirit thus, ultimately, gives His people the power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ (Acts 1:8). He opens the hearts of hearers that we might see Christ and believe in Christ (Rom. 15:18-19; Acts 16:14; Jn. 3:8). He daily transforms believers from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18). And He distributes gifts and empowers the church for her mission on Earth by glorifying Christ in a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel in such a way that following Him becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart (2 Cor. 4:4-6).

THE FUTURE HOPE:

- We eagerly await the visible, personal, and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:15-19) who upon His second coming will conquer evil once and for all and judge the living and the dead. All brokenness, injustice, suffering, pain and strife will be set right and every tear will be wiped away as imperfection will give way to perfection (Rev 20:7-15). The just will be resurrected in their glorified bodies to receive their reward and dwell in the presence of God forever and ever. We believe that at this time King Jesus will finish His work of perfectly and fully recreating the Heavens, the Earth, and all that is within it in order that all creation may triumphantly and eternally proclaim the glories of our creator God who has made all things new (Rev 21:1-5).

BAPTISM:

- We believe that baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace in which the believer publicly testifies to God, to the church, to oneself and the world, that he or she is now dead to self and alive in Christ – united with Him in His death and resurrection (Gal. 2:20-21). As such water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ’s atoning work (1 Pet. 3:21). Further, we believe that the precedent within the New Testament is Baptism following conversion by immersion into water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:13-17).

THE LORD’S SUPPER:

- We believe that the Lord’s supper is an outward sign of an inward grace in which the real spiritual presence of Christ is present as we partake in and are nourished by the bread and the cup with reverent gratitude for His sacrificial death on our behalf, self-examination of our lives, and hopeful expectation of His return in which He will come to make all things new (1 Cor 11:23-26).

