

WHAT WE BELIEVE



SOUTH NORFOLK
C H R I S T I A N C H U R C H

The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, composed of the Old Testament & the New Testament, 66 books in total, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; 20:31; Acts 20:32).

The Last Things

We believe that Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return to the earth and establish His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15)

The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption (Genesis 1:1, 26; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 3; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:4-6; Mark 1:10-11; Ephesians 1:3-14).

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:9; Luke 10:21-22; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1-2; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6).

Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth (Matthew 1:18-25; 20:28; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28, 30-31; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; 8:38-39, 9:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28).

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26).

The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the head. All regenerated persons are members of this body. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost world (Acts 1:8; 2:42; Ephesians 2:19; Ephesians 5:19-21; Hebrews 10:23-25).

Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men, that his conduct should be blameless before the world, that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ (John 14:15; 14:23-24; Romans 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Colossians 1:9-10; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 2:3-6)

Marriage

We believe that God gave marriage to mankind as part of His common grace, and that it has no meaning other than as He has provided (Gen. 2:18–24). We believe that marriage is subject to the curse of the Fall but that believers, living in obedience to the Scripture and under the control of the Holy Spirit, can begin to experience peaceful, productive, and fulfilled marriages as intended by God (Genesis 3:16; 1 Peter 3:1-7). We believe that the marriages of believers are to illustrate the loving relationship of Christ and His church, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife responding to her husband's loving leadership as the church responds to Christ (Ephesians 5:18–33). We believe that as Christian marriages are to illustrate Christ's relationship with His church, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14). We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning. Marriage: the God-sanctioned joining of one born biologically man and one born biologically woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in scripture (Genesis 2:23–24). We believe that marriage is always a public, formal, and officially recognized covenant between a man and a woman. We believe that a "common law marriage," in specific cases under pertinent law, can constitute a valid marriage covenant. However, we also believe that prolonged conjugal cohabitation does not establish, and thus is not equivalent to a marriage covenant (John 4:18). We believe that where a valid marriage has been established prior to coming to faith in Christ, the couple should remain married (1 Corinthians 7:24). We believe that God hates divorce, permitting it only where there has been unrepentant sexual sin (Malachi 2:14–16; Matthew 5:32, 19:9) or desertion by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12–15). We believe that remarriage is permitted to a believing partner, but only when the divorce was on biblical grounds. We

believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a born biological man and a born biological woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded mankind not to engage in intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage (Hebrews 13:4).

Sexuality

We believe that any form of sexual immorality is contrary to God's clearly declared will. This includes, but is not limited to, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to change one's gender, and identification with a gender other than one's born biological gender. We believe that the practice of any of these is subject to God's wrath and will result in His abandonment if there is no repentance. It is a matter of choice, representing man's ungrateful rebellion against God. (Leviticus 18:1–30; Matthew 5:8; Romans 1:18–32; Ephesians 5:3–5; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of the church. We believe that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture, including the call to repentance, does not constitute hate speech or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of the church's loving mission to the world (Matthew 28:16–20; 2 Corinthians 5:11–20; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:1–2). 7 We believe that God offers redemption and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin—including sexual sin—seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that His forgiveness is total and complete (Psalm 103:11–12; 130:3–4; Isaiah 43:25; 44:22; John 5:24; Colossians 2:13–14) and that God imputes the full righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21) to the believing sinner. We believe that the forgiven sinner has been cleansed from the guilt of sin, set apart unto God, or made holy, and justified before Him (1 Corinthians 6:9–11). We believe that any man or woman who has received that forgiveness is “in Christ” and is a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for the commemoration of His death and recognition of our communion and fellowship together in Christ. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 6:3–5; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Religious Liberty We believe that every Christian has a direct relationship with God and will ultimately give an account to God in all matters of faith. Each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. Therefore, church and state must be kept separate. They carry out different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other (Romans 14:7–9, 12; 1 Timothy 2:5).