

GREAT OAKS FELLOWSHIP BELIEFS

Thank you for taking the time to consider what it would mean to join us on mission at Great Oaks Fellowship. We understand that each person comes from different backgrounds, faiths and worldviews that can shape our perspective on matters of spirituality.

It's our heart to be clear so that you have an understanding of what we believe as we study the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to shape our relationships with God.

This sheet is intended to invite you into what we've discovered in the Scriptures and to also inspire conversations to discuss these beliefs in the context of relationship and respect for anyone who may have questions.

**Thank you!
-Pastor David**

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is the Holy Spirit inspired Word of God. The Bible is the highest doctrinal authority for Great Oaks Fellowship. Meaning, the Bible is God's Word and love letter to us. 2 Timothy explains, *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."* 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT

TRINITY: GOD IS

We believe there is only one true God, who eternally exists as a Trinity of equally divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity thinks, acts, feels, speaks, and relates, because each is a person and not an impersonal force. Each member of the Trinity is equally God, sharing all the divine attributes.(2) Because love and community flow from the Trinity to us through the Holy Spirit, we seek to live in loving community with God and others.

REVELATION: GOD SPEAKS

We believe that God reveals Himself to everyone everywhere through general and specific revelation.(3) We believe it is only by special revelation that anyone comes to a saving knowledge of God.(4) We believe God has supremely revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, the Son of God and his incarnate Word. We believe that all of the divinely Holy Spirit inspired, inerrant, authoritative, sixty-six canonical books of the Bible reveal to us Jesus Christ.(5) Because God is a

loving Father who speaks, we seek to hear from Him and test everything by the Word of God. We believe that every person who has said yes to Jesus alone, in faith, for salvation is not only sealed by the Holy Spirit for salvation but also is a vessel to be filled with the Holy Spirit to hear God's voice so that we can commune and obey with Him.

CREATION: GOD MAKES

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, and lovingly prepared them as a home in which to worship and enjoy Him.(6) Everything in creation and history is dependent upon God and is only good when functioning according to his intentions. God, the author and subject of history, will bring history to an end and create a new heaven and a new earth.(7) Because God is our Creator we worship Him alone and enjoy his creation gladly.

IMAGE: GOD LOVES

We believe that in love God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve, as male and female, equal in dignity, value, and worth, in order to mirror and reflect God as an act of worship and obedience. We believe that human beings, as God's sole image bearers, are under God and over lower creation, not to be pulled up like gods or pushed down like animals.(8) We believe that human life begins at conception and that an unborn baby is an image-bearer of God.(9) We believe that God created marriage solely for one man and one woman, and created sex only for married couples.(10) Because God created human life and marriage, we value the sanctity of life and godly marriage.

FALL: GOD JUDGES

We believe that God created this world in a perfect state.(11) In Eden, Satan tempted Eve to mistrust God's word, and she was deceived.(12) The sin committed by Adam, also called "original sin," has been imputed to all human beings except Jesus Christ.(13) All human beings are sinners by both nature and choice.(14) All fallen people are by nature sinners, children of wrath, and destined to death.(15) Because we are sinners in need of a Savior and new nature, we trust in Jesus Christ alone for new and eternal life and believe in the reality of spiritual warfare with Satan and demons.

COVENANT: GOD PURSUES

We believe that God makes and keeps his covenant promises.(16) God's covenants reveal his loving grace and mercy, because although people deserve nothing but condemnation, God gives gracious, covenantal salvation. Because God has welcomed us into eternal covenant relationship, we seek to live in gracious loving relationship with Him and others.

INCARNATION: GOD COMES

We believe that the eternal Son of God and second person of the Trinity became flesh, adding humanity to his divinity, and entered into human history as the God-Man, Jesus Christ.(17) Jesus alone is one person with two natures, fully God and fully man. Jesus Christ is the Word, or Logos, of God because he is the personal, eternally existing Creator of the universe, distinct from, yet equal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem to redeem sinful man as the only mediator between God and man.(18) We believe that Jesus Christ, during the Incarnation, laid aside the continual exercise of his divine attributes and lived his sinless life by the power of the Holy Spirit.(19) Because He is both our Savior and example, we deeply love Jesus Christ and seek to live with and like Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CROSS: GOD DIES

We believe that Jesus Christ lived a perfectly righteous and sinless life, died in the place of sinners, fully absorbing the wrath of God, paying the just penalty for their sins and reconciling them to God.(20) As our substitute, on the cross Jesus Christ suffered and died in our place to forgive us, love us, cleanse us, and embrace us as the punishment for our sins was diverted from us to Jesus.(21) Because Jesus died for our sins we seek to humbly confess our sins to Jesus Christ and one another, put sin to death in our life, forgive one another, and happily invite others to do the same.

RESURRECTION: GOD SAVES

We believe that Jesus Christ, after dying on the cross, arose bodily from the grave on the third day, appearing to many witnesses and proving that he was physically alive.(22) Through faith we are united with the risen Christ, raised with Christ, and granted the same Holy Spirit power that raised Christ.(23) The benefits of Jesus' resurrection include the forgiveness of sins, justification, sanctification, and ultimately glorification.(24) We believe that justification through the work of Jesus Christ is possible by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.(25) His righteousness is imparted to us at the time of saving faith, simultaneous with our justification, and brings us new life by the Holy Spirit, who regenerates us with a new nature and begins sanctifying us to become increasingly more like Jesus.(25) Because Jesus is alive forever, we confidently trust that one day we will likewise rise from our grave to live together as God's people with Him forever.

CHURCH: GOD SENDS

We believe that the local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and that the universal church is comprised of all God's people in all times and places.(27) In obedience to Scripture, Christians organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the sacraments of baptism and Communion, are unified by the Spirit in love, are corrected for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the great commandment and

the great commission as missionaries to the world.(28) Because we are members of God's universal church, we partner with other Christian local churches and ministries for Kingdom ministry and are devoted to building up our local church family.

WORSHIP: GOD TRANSFORMS

We believe that human beings, made in the image of God the Trinity (who is Himself a worshipping community), are unceasing worshipers created to continually outpour all they are, all they do, and all they can ever become to God. Worship includes praise, proclamation, service, participation, sacrifice, and submission.(29) We believe that the corporate worship of a local church is to be God-centered.(30) We believe that the corporate church worship should include Bible preaching, the sacraments, prayer, Scripture reading, financial giving, and singing and music.(31) Because we are worshippers, we embrace all of life, including our corporate church gatherings, as an opportunity to passionately worship God in practical ways.

STEWARDSHIP: GOD GIVES

We believe that Christians are to be stewards who gladly acknowledge that they belong to the Lord, that everything they have belongs to the Lord, and that everything ultimately belongs to the Lord.(32) Stewards should value both work and Sabbath so that their time and energy are well managed.(33) We believe that all spiritual gifts are a special grace of the Holy Spirit, given to us at our new birth to serve the mission of Jesus, and continue to the present age.(34) Because God has been generous to us, we seek to love and serve others as generous and wise stewards for God.

KINGDOM: GOD REIGNS

We believe that God created humans with a spirit and body tightly joined together.(35) Death is not normal or natural, but an enemy, the consequence of sin.(36) Death is the tearing apart of these two intertwined parts and the cessation of life on this earth. The body goes to the grave and the spirit goes to face judgment before God.(37) Upon Jesus' second coming, there will be a bodily resurrection for everyone, to either eternal salvation or condemnation.(38) The time between Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection is a lengthy ministry season of love, grace, and mercy as news of the gospel goes forth, inviting sinners to repent of sin and enjoy the present and future salvation of Jesus Christ.(39) Because our eternal home is in the Kingdom of God, as we journey home our mission is to joyfully invite others to join us while we throw parties, have fun, and make friends to practice for eternity.

References:

1 One God: see Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4-5; 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:2; 2 Samuel 7:22; 22:32; 1 Kings 8:59-60; 2 Chronicles 15:3; Psalm 86:8-10; Isaiah 37:20; 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:5, 14, 21-22; 46:9; Jeremiah 10:10; John 5:44; 17:3;

Romans 3:30; 16:27; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Galatians 3:20; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2:5; James 2:19; 1 John 5:20-21; Jude 1:25. Father: see John 6:27; 17:1; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3. Son: see Matthew 28:9; John 1:1-4, 14; 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-39; 12:37-41; see also Isaiah 6:9-11; 20:28-29; Matthew 26:63-65; John 5:17-23; 19:7; Romans 1:3-4; 9:5; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:10-11; Colossians 1:16-17; 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 6:15; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 1:8, 17-18; 17:14; 19:16; 22:13-16. Holy Spirit: see Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; Micah 3:8; Hebrews 9:14; see also Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13, 19; Isaiah 40:13-14; see also John 14:16; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 3:16-18.

2 Eternality: see Psalm 90:2; 93:2; 102:12; Ephesians 3:21. Omniscience: see Job 42:2; Psalm 139:1-6; 147:5; Isaiah 40:12-14; 46:10; Hebrews 4:13. Omnipotence: see Job 42:2; Psalm 147:5; Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 3:20. Omnipresence: see Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 139:7-12; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24; Colossians 1:17.

3 Creation: see Psalm 8:3-4; 19:1, 4; 139:13-16; Romans 1:19-20. Common grace: see Exodus 31:2-11; 35:30-35; Psalm 65:9; 104:14; Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17.

Conscience: see Romans 2:14-15.

4 See Acts 10:1-7; Romans 2:7, 10; 10:15-18.

5 Jesus is God's final Word to us: see John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2. The Bible is divinely inspired: see 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21. Inerrant: see Numbers 23:19; 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 12:6; 19:7; 119:140, 160; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 55:11; John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 4:12; 6:18. Authoritative and written: see Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 1 John 1:1-3. Reveals Jesus Christ: see John 1:1. The entire Bible reveals Jesus Christ: see Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:27; Romans 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15.

6 God the Father's role in Creation: see Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 11:3.

God the Son's role in Creation: see John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:13-16. God the Holy Spirit's role in Creation: see Genesis 1:2; Job. 33:4; Psalm 104:30. The earth was created out of nothing: see Hebrews 11:3. The earth was lovingly created: see Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26. The earth is a good gift to humanity: see Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. The earth is a home in which people can worship and enjoy God: see Psalm 19:1-2; Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 10:12; Revelation 4:11.

7 See Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1.

8 See Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 5:1-3; 9:6; Romans 1:25; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9.

9 See Psalm 51:5-6; 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15.

10 See Genesis 2:18-25; Proverbs 5:18-19; Matthew 5:32; 19:9, 18; Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:16-24.

11 See Genesis 1:31; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 32:14-20; 43:1-12; 60:1-22; 65:17-25; Joel 2:24-29; 3:17-18.

12 See John 8:42-47; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14.

13 See Romans 5:19.

14 See Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8.

15 See Romans 5:12, 19; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, respectively.

16 See Genesis 26:28. The covenants of Abraham: see Genesis 15:18. Moses: see Exodus 24:8; Deuteronomy 5:2. David: see 2 Chronicles 21:7; Psalm 89:3. The New Covenant: see Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 37:26.

17 See Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-38.

18 See Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-23; 1 Timothy 2:5.

19 See Matthew 3:16; 4:1-10; Mark 2:1-7; Luke 4:1-2, 14-21; 10:21; Hebrews 4:14-16.

20 See Isaiah 53:5, 12; Romans 3:23-25; 4:25; 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2.

21 Jesus substituted Himself for sinners: See Isaiah 53:6; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14; Revelation 5:9. Sins were propitiated: See Romans 3:23-25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10. Jesus accomplished this by giving his blood: See Isaiah 59:2; Hosea 5:6; John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; Titus 3:4-5; 1 John 4:9-10.

22 See Isaiah 53:8-12; Matthew 12:38-40; 27:57-60; 28:9; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Luke 24:36-43; John 2:18-22; 19:34-35; 20:17, 20-28; 21:7, 12; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6.

23 See Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Colossians 2:12; 3:1.

24 See 1 Corinthians 15:3-58; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:20, respectively.

25 See Acts 13:38; Romans 4:3-5; 5:1, 16-17; Titus 3:7.

26 See 2 Corinthians 5:21.

27 See Acts 2:36-41; Matthew 16:18, respectively.

28 Believers organize under qualified leadership, gather for preaching, and observe baptism and Communion: Acts 2:42. Gather for worship: Matthew 2:11; 4:9; 8:2; 28:9; Acts 2:47; Romans 1:9; 12:1; Revelation 7:15; 19:10. Are unified by the Spirit: Ephesians 4:4. Are disciplined for holiness: Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 20:25-31; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:1-8; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 11:3-4, 13-15; Galatians 1:6-9; 5:7-15; 6:1-5; Philippians 3:2-3; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:4-7, 18-20; 4:1-8; 5:19-21; 2 Timothy 2:14-26; 4:1-5; Titus 3:10-11; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17; James 3:1; 1 John 2:19; 3 John 1:9-10. Fulfill the Great Commandment: Matthew 5:43-45; 6:24; 22:39; Luke 6:32; 10:30-37; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; Ephesians 5:25; 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 2:4; Hebrews 13:2, 17; James 2:8; 1 John 3:14. Fulfill the Great Commission: Matt. 28; Acts 1:8; 2:47; Acts 13:43; 17:4, 17; 18:4; 19:4, 26; 26:1-28; 28:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:11, 20; Col. 1:28-29. Act as missionaries for God's glory and their joy: Acts 2:41-47.

29 See Hebrews 13:15-17.

30 See Matthew 4:8-10.

31 See Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:1; 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2.

32 See Haggai 2:8; Malachi 3:8; Romans 1:6; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 2:10.

33 See Genesis 2:2, 15; Exodus 20:8-11; Proverbs 18:9; 21:25; Ecclesiastes 3:22; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Colossians 3:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

34 See Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11.

35 See Genesis 2:7.

36 See Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12.

37 See Ecclesiastes 3:20-21; 12:7; Psalm 104:29; 146:4; Hebrews 9:27; James 2:26.

38 See Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; John 14:3.

39 See John 14:3; Acts 17:30-31.