

Village Hope Church Statement of Faith

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of Village Hope Church and its members:

- (A) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plerarily inspired Word of God in its original writing. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and inspired directly by God Himself (God-breathed) and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to humanity. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastor, whose leadership is accountable to the elders. (2Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- (B) **The Godhead.** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – known as the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Cor. 13:14)
- (C) **God the Father.**
1. We believe God the Father created the universe and everything in it. Even in His immeasurable greatness and power He, at the same time, is a personal God who knows our every need. Jesus said that God knows us so well that He has every hair on our head numbered, and that He knew us before we were even born physically. (Genesis 1; Luke 12:7; Psalm 139:13; Matthew 6:26)
 2. Jesus challenges us to think of God as our “Heavenly Father” – calling him “Abba” – an Aramaic word which represents what we would call “Dad”. We believe that God the Father is the perfect example for all earthly fathers. He is holy, just and fair, but His most outstanding quality is love. (Romans 8:15-16; I John 4:8; Matthew 8:12-14)
 3. We believe that God set a plan in place to save humanity from itself. Left to our own sinful choices, we would we would never be able to experience a relationship with God but instead, spend eternity in hell. Because of this, God the Father graciously sent Jesus to die in our place, so that when we choose him, we can choose God and Heaven. God the Father’s plan for salvation is lovingly based on his grace, not on human works. Only the righteousness of Jesus is acceptable to God the Father. Repenting of sin and accepting Christ as Savior makes us righteous in God’s eyes. (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23)
- (D) **The Person and Work of Christ.**
1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men from the required penalty of their sins. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)

2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2)

(E) The Existence and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a supernatural being and member of the Holy Trinity who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20,27)
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
4. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are still available today and none have ceased. Jesus promised believers that every miracle that He did, and more, would be practiced through his followers, after He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in them (John 14:12) (Hebrews 13:7). God's Word says to call on the elders of the church, and their prayer will heal you (James 5:14-16). There is nothing historical about speaking in tongues in Mark 16:17 "These are the signs that will accompany those who believe..." However, speaking in tongues should be practiced in accordance with 1 Cor. 14. God longs to give gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11). 1 Cor. 12:28 lists gifts, and the order in which they should be desired. Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Cor. 12:8-10 list specific gifts that the body of believers should have. If these are the signs that will accompany those who believe, as Mark said it, then we should earnestly be seeking the physical manifestations of our belief.

(F) The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. As a result, mankind is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

(G) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that all sins, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, are forgivable. (Matt. 12:31-32; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:9)

(H) **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.**

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
2. We believe that we do not humanly possess the knowledge to clearly discern the heart of another, and therefore must acknowledge that as Matthew 7:21-23 explains, God Himself remains final authority as to whether someone has truly sought redemption through confession of sins and repentance.
3. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

(I) **The Church.**

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local congregations and assemblies of believers as members of Christ's one church is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
4. We believe that there is only one Christian church – established by Christ himself when he gave the Great Commission, and empowered by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Village Hope Church exists as a local assembly of the original New Testament church and as such shall remain unaffiliated with any man-made denomination of that original church. Further, we believe that the Bible warns against denominational divisions as a means of placing man's interpretation of scripture over the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately dividing the church and confusing the message of Christ to the point that the very cross of Christ is "emptied of its power." (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9)

- i. While Village Hope is unaffiliated with a denomination, it should not be interpreted that it should remain separate from other denominational churches in sharing the Gospel. On the contrary, as members of the body of Christ we encourage interaction and collaborative efforts that serve to further the cause of Christ in our fallen world.
- 5. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
- (J) **Separation.** We believe that all members of the body of Christ should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)
- (K) **The Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, imminent return of Christ, where God will rapture His church. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14: 4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)
- (L) **The Eternal State.**
 - 1. We believe in the bodily, physical resurrection of all people, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
 - 2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23; 43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
 - 3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer eternal conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15)
- (M) **The Existence of Satan.** We believe that Satan is a supernatural being, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

- (N) **Creation.** We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)
- (O) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)
- (P) **Human Sexuality.**
1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's original, perfect plan for sexual intimacy. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6-9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
 2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph.5:22-23)
- (Q) **Family Relationship.**
1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
 2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

- (R) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Yet, we further believe that divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service or leadership in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, if the divorce meets the qualifications described in Scripture. Divorces occurring prior to a person's relationship with Christ do not necessarily disqualify that person from service or leadership in the church. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)
- (S) **Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion is the murder of an unborn child. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
- (T) **Euthanasia.** We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is murder, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. However, discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)
- (U) **Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)
- (V) **Lawsuits between Believers.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- (W) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that as many as possible will be saved from the penalty of their sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. Further, we believe that the concept of "missions" is not restricted to foreign lands or remote people groups, but rather includes all people equally – including our own local area, and cities and neighborhoods in our own country. (Matt. 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)

- (X) **Giving.** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support his local church assembly. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

SECTION 2.02 – AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members of this local assembly. All literature and curriculum used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.