

## **EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF CANADA**

### **Statement of Faith**

*The Evangelical Free Church of Canada is an association of autonomous churches united in a common commitment to God's evangel -- the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to give us eternal life. To God's glory, the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Our essential theological convictions are vitally connected to this gospel.*

#### ***God's gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God.***

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

#### ***God's gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures.***

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavour should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

#### ***God's gospel alone addresses our deepest need.***

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

#### ***God's gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.***

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

#### ***God's gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.***

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

***God's gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.***

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

***God's gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.***

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

***God's gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.***

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

***God's gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself at the end of this age.***

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role as Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

***God's gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.***

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

***“God’s gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God”***

## Article 1

## God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

**I. The Gospel is the Expression of God’s Essential Nature.**

*A. We believe in one God*

- Deuteronomy. 6:4; Psalm 86:10; Isaiah 46:9; Mark. 12:29

*B. God is the Creator of all things*

- Genesis 1-2; Psalm 33:6; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:24-25
- 1. God alone is the Creator
  - Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11
- 2. God’s creation is ordered and purposeful
  - Psalm 19:1; Colossians 1:15-17
- 3. God’s creation is good
  - Genesis 1:31; I Timothy 4:4

*C. God is holy.*

- Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 10:3; I Samuel 6:20; Isaiah 6:3; 57:15; I Peter 1:16

*D. God is Infinitely Perfect*

- Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 18:30; 145:3; Matthew 5:48; Romans 11:33

*E. God exists eternally*

- Psalm 90:2; 102:25-27; Daniel 4:34-35

*F. God is loving*

- John 17:24; 1 John 4:8, 16

*G. The One God is Triune*

- He exists in three equally divine Persons
- Matthew. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians. 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2
- God is one in essence but plural within His nature.
- Father (Deuteronomy 32:6; Matthew 6:6; John 17:5,11,21,24; I Corinthians 8:6)
- Son (Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 2:5-7; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; 5:18; Romans 9:5; Galatians 4:4; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-5)
- Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29; John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 5:1-4; Romans 8:9, 26-27; Galatians 4:6)

**II. The Gospel is the Outworking of God’s Eternal Purpose.**

*A. God acts with Limitless Knowledge and Sovereign Power*

1. Limitless knowledge
  - Psalm 139:1-16; 147:5; Isaiah 46:10; John 21:17
2. Sovereign power
  - Isaiah 46:10; Jeremiah 32:17; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Revelation 1:8

*B. God has Purposed from Eternity to Redeem*

- I Chronicles 17:21; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:3-5,10-11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 2:14; 1 Peter 1:20; 2:9; Revelation 13:8

*C. God Will Redeem a People for Himself*

- Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:11; Revelation 7:9-10

*D. God will Make All Things New*

- Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:21; Romans 8:19-21; Revelation 21 & 22

*E. God Will Act for His Own Glory*

- Psalm 19:1-2; Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 13:11; Colossians 1:15-23; Revelation 4:11; 5:9 -14

**“God’s gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures”**

## Article 2

## The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

**I. God Has Spoken**

- Genesis 1:3,6,9,14,20,24,29; Psalm 19:1-2; 33:6,9; 60:6; Acts 3:17-19; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 1:1

**II. God Has Spoken in the Scriptures***A. The Bible Consists of Both Old and New Testaments*

- Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 24:44
- Trusting the Scriptures was an important issue to EFCC founders. They submitted every point of doctrine and practice to the authority of Scripture, asking “*Where Stands it Written*”. Since our founding fathers came from Scandinavian countries where final authority rested in the State and church authorities, this was a notable stand for them to take. The EFCC is still committed to this position today!

*B. God has Spoken in the Scriptures Through the Words of Human Authors*

- Matthew 1:22; 4:4; 19:4,5; Luke 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 3:15,16
- The Bible did not write itself – God, by His Spirit, moved human authors to give us His Word.

*C. The Bible is the Verbally Inspired Word of God*

- Mark 12:36; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 3:7,8; 2 Peter 1:20, 21

## 1. The Bible is without error in the original writings

- Numbers 23:19; I Samuel 15:29; Psalm 12:6; 119:89, 96; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 45:19; Matthew 5:18; John 10:34-36; 17:17
- We have confidence that God used human personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative writings. We believe that every word and idea in Scripture originated in God and were recorded without error in the original manuscripts.

## 2. The Bible is complete

- Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 24:35; Luke 16:29-31; John 1:1,14; 6:68; Colossians 2:2,3; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:24-25
- The Bible contains clear teaching as to how a person can be reconciled to God and obtain eternal life.
- While God does reveal something of His nature through creation, the Bible most fully reveals His nature and plan of salvation.

## 3. The Bible is authoritative

- Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 14:37-38; Galatians 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23
- The Bible is true not only in matters of salvation but in every field of study it touches.

**III. Our Response to God’s Word**

- We believe all that the Bible teaches (Genesis 15:6; Isaiah 53:1; John 1:7; Acts 4:4; 13:48; 24:14)
- We obey all that the Bible requires (Psalm 119:44-45, 162-168; Matthew 28:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 2:5)
- We trust all that the Bible promises (Romans 1:2; 4:21; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Peter 1:4; 3:13)

**“God’s gospel alone addresses our deepest human need.”**

Article 3

The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

**I. The Source of Human Dignity: Our Creation in God’s Image**

A. *Human Beings as God’s Image*

- Genesis 1:26-27, 31; 5:1; 9:6; Proverbs 14:31; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:9-10; James. 3:9

B. *The Significance of Adam and Eve*

- Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; Acts 17:26; Romans 1:26-27

**II. The Source of Human Depravity: Our Fall into Sin**

A. *Tempted by Satan*

- Adam and Eve sinned. Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2

B. *The Nature of Sin*

**III. The Continuing Effects of Sin: Our Union with Adam**

A. *Sinful by Nature and by Choice*

- Psalm 51:5; 58:3; 130:3; 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:22

1. *The Breadth of Sin*

- Genesis 6:5; Isaiah 6:5; 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 11:19; Romans 3:10-15; 8:5-8; Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:17-19; I John 1:8

2. *The Depth of Sin*

- Romans 3:9-20, 23

B. *Alienated from God*

- Genesis 3:24; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:1, 4-5; 4:18; Colossians 1:21

C. *Under God’s Wrath*

- Romans 1:18, 21, 23; 2:5; 5:9; Ephesians 2:3; I Thessalonians 5:9; Rev 6:17

**IV. Our Only Hope: God’s Saving Work in Jesus Christ – Rescued, Reconciled, Renewed**

A. *Rescued*

- Acts 4:11-12; Romans 8:1; 6:18, 22; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9; I Timothy 2:5-6

B. *Reconciled*

- Romans 5:1-2, 10-11, 18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:19-20; Heb 1:3

C. *Renewed*

- Romans 8:16, 29; I Corinthians 15:45, 49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2

**“God’s gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.”**

Article 4

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel’s promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

**I. Jesus’ Identity: He is God Incarnate**

- We believe that 2000 years ago, Jesus, “Emmanuel” (which means, “God with us”), was fully God and fully human when He came and lived in human history in time and space.
- John 8:58; 14:6; 20:31

*A. Jesus Christ is Fully God*

1. Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1,14; 5:18; 10:30, 33; 14:9; 17:5; I Corinthians 8:4-6; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:1-2

*B. Jesus Christ is Fully Man*

1. Romans 1:2-3; 5:19; 9:4-5; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14,17; I John 4:2-3

*C. Conceived Through the Holy Spirit, Born of a Virgin*

- Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-35; I Corinthians 15:47

*D. Jesus is Israel’s Promised Messiah*

- Jesus came to time and space as a Jew – the Messiah, who fulfilled the promises recorded by the prophets of the Old Testament.
- Genesis 49:8-12; Matthew 1:1,17; Luke 1:32-33; 4:16-22; 24:25-27; John 1:41; 4:25-26; 5:46; Acts 2:36; 13:23, 32-33; Galatians 3:29

**II. Jesus’ Life**

*A. Jesus Lived Without Sin*

- 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 3:18; I John 3:5

*B. Jesus was Crucified Under Pontius Pilate*

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Matthew 16:21-22; 20:18-19; 26:2; 27:26, 30-35; Mark 15:15; John 19:16; Acts 2:23; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 3:1

*C. Jesus Arose Bodily From the Dead*

1. Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24; John 20:19, 26; Acts 1:3; 17:31; Romans 1:3-4; 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3-6; 20; Colossians 1:18

*D. Jesus Ascended to the Father’s Right Hand*

- We believe Jesus arose bodily from the dead. Why is it important that Jesus triumphed over the grave, rising from the dead? (I Corinthians 15:12-20)
- 1. Luke 24:51; Acts 1:6-11; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:18-20; 4:8-10; Colossians 3:1; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:21-22; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1-2; 10:11-12; 12:1-2; Revelation 3:21

*E. Jesus is our High Priest and Advocate*

1. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:25; 8:1; 9:24; 1 John 2:1

**“God’s gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.”**



## Article 5

## The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

### I. Of Central Importance: Jesus Christ Shed His Blood on the Cross

- Our sin separates us from a holy God. In order for sins to be forgiven, someone who was perfect had to pay the penalty – Jesus Christ bore our sins on the cross by giving up His life's blood and dying on our behalf.
- Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Hebrews 9:14, 22; 10:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 12:10-11

### II. Christ's Atoning Death: The Perfect. All-sufficient Sacrifice

#### A. *The Atonement*

##### 1. Jesus, Our Substitute: Penal Substitution

- Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:25-26; 5:8-9; I Corinthians 15:2-3; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15, 17; 9:14, 22; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; I John 1:7, 29; 2:2; 4:10; Revelation 1:5

##### 2. Jesus, Our Representative: Union with Christ

- Jesus died in our place. As sinners, we appropriate this gift of salvation by receiving Christ by faith and becoming children of God (John 1:12).
- Matthew 1:21; Romans 4:25; 5:12-21; 6:2-11; Hebrews 2:10-11,

### III. Christ's Victorious Resurrection: His Victory and Ours

#### A. *Jesus' Vindication and Victory*

- Isaiah 53:11-12; Matthew 28:16-18; Luke 24:26; Acts 2:24, 36; Romans 1:3-4; Ephesians 1:18-22; Philippians 2:5-11; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; I Peter 3:20-22
- Victorious resurrection: I Corinthians 15:1-20 speaks about the importance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead – why is it so important for salvation?
- Salvation: This means that a person is "saved" from the penalty of sin, is no longer separated from God, becomes part of God's family and has eternal life.

#### B. *Our Great Hope*

- Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Philippians 3:20-21; I Peter 1:3-4; I John 3:2; 5:12

**“God’s gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

Article 6

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

**I. Who Is the Holy Spirit?**

- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s primary goal is to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14). The Spirit is our “Helper” who lives in us and enables us to walk in obedience to Christ.
- Genesis 1:2, Exodus 31:2-5; Numbers 11:25; Ezekiel 2:1-2; 8:3; 11:1, 24; Isaiah 11:1-5; 42:1-4; Joel 2:28-32; Luke 1:35; 4:14, 17-21; John 15:26; 16:5-15; Acts 10:37-38; Romans 1:3-4; Ephesians 4:30

**II. What Does the Holy Spirit Do?**

*A. Convicts the World of its Guilt.*

- John 16:7-11; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

*B. Regenerates Sinners*

- Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 24:7; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:2

*C. In the Holy Spirit, believers are baptized into Union with Christ*

- Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 4:13

*D. In the Holy Spirit, believers are Adopted as Heirs in the Family of God*

- Romans 8:15-16, 23; 9:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Gal 3:26-27; 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:5, 14; Titus 3:5-7

*E. Indwells Believers*

- Luke 1:15-17; 41, 67; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 6:3-5, 24; 7:55; 9:17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 John 4:13

*F. Illuminates Believers*

- Acts 15:28; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:17-19

*G. Guides Believers*

- Luke 4:1; John 16:13; Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 20:22-23; Romans 8:3-4, 12-14; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 1:17; 6:17

*H. Equips Believers*

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

*I. Empowers Believers for Christ-like Living and Service*

- Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:4-6, 12-16; 15:13; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 3:16-21; Philippians 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 1:7

**“God’s gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.”**

## Article 7

## The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

## I. The Nature of the Church

### A. True Church

- This is composed of people from every nation who are justified before God and united with Christ through faith. Those who are justified are those declared not guilty by God because their sin has been forgiven by virtue of accepting Jesus' gift by faith.
- John 3:14-21; Acts 2:42-47; 11:25-26; 16:31; Romans 3:20-28; 5:1, 19, 21; 8:1, 30, 33-34; 10:4, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:8-9; Titus 3:5-7

### B. Headship of Christ

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18; 2:19
- Christ is the Head. The Church belongs to Jesus. It is not owned by a denomination, by clergy or by a religious organization. Those in pastoral roles are “under-shepherds” who are accountable to Jesus for how they shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4)

### C. Local Church

1. A visible Community Manifesting the True Church in the World.
  - Members of the “universal church” have always met locally to worship, learn, fellowship and encourage each other.
  - Ephesians 3:4-12: How does this passage speak to the reality of the Universal Church?
  - Acts 9:31; 20:28-30; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; 12:27; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1-2
2. Local Church Membership Should be Composed only of Believers.
  - Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 2:41, 46-47; 14:23; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 14:39-40; 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:24-25
  - The early Free Church Fathers proclaimed “believers only, but all believers”. This means that local churches should be fellowships of those who have come to faith in Christ, and that those who may disagree over minor issues of faith should not be excluded from fellowship.
  - The EFCC highlights the “priesthood of all believers”. All believers - clergy and laity - are called by God to salvation, obedience and service. One implication of this doctrine is manifested in local church government: The EFCC holds to a congregational form of local church government. The believers who make up the congregation elect leaders (a church “board”) and the leaders take responsibility to lead the church in following Jesus Christ the Head.
  - Thus, in EFCC churches the congregation is the highest authority, not a bishop, board of elders, nor regional presbytery (or classis). In congregationalism all members actively participate in the directing of the church under the Word of God and in obedience to Christ. The EFCC founders intended this to specifically mean that no level of civil government would direct the affairs of the local church.

Congregationalism ennobles the local church to be the Temple of the Spirit, the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ. Congregationalism in any church will defer and entrust leadership and decision making to those among themselves they deem to be trustworthy and accountable to the will and leading of the congregation. Individual churches will differ in the degree of trust that is placed in the stewardship of elders, staff, pastors and boards who serve the congregation.

## II. The Ordinances of the Church

The Lord's Supper and Baptism.

### A. Nature of the Ordinances

1. Their Source: The Ordinances are Mandated by the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Matthew 26:26-29; 28:18-20; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-19
2. Their Purpose: The Ordinances Visibly and Tangibly Express the Gospel
  - Both ordinances proclaim the Good News of Jesus death and resurrection.
  - Water baptism declares the reality of a believer dying with Christ and raising to new life. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the body and blood of Christ given to us to save us from our sins.
  - They are also experienced physically (tangibly) – we “eat and drink” and are “washed”
  - a. The Ordinances are not the means of Salvation
    - Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs, pointing us to the reality of Jesus' saving work in His death and resurrection. They do not save those participants. We are saved by God's grace through faith alone in Christ.
    - Hence, the EFCC does not hold to a sacramental view of the Lord's Supper that promotes theologies of transubstantiation (the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ and eating them imparts grace) or consubstantiation (the bread and wine contain the spiritual presence of Christ and impart grace).
  - b. When celebrated by the Church in genuine faith, the ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.
    - These are practices that only believers should participate in.
    - While we do not hold to a “sacramental” understanding of the ordinances, we do believe that they were given as a God-ordained means of spiritual growth and edification.
    - John 6:55-56; Acts 2:38; 8:39; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Colossians 2:11-12

### B. Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism
  - a. Baptism as a Believer's profession
    - Baptism is a public declaration of a believer's commitment to Christ.
    - Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:3-4
    - Acts 2:36-47: How are baptism and faith in Christ linked in this passage?
  - b. Baptism as the Church's affirmation
    - The church hears and affirms the believer's profession and publicly recognizes the one being baptized as a Christian brother or sister
    - Being adopted as a child of God means being a part of a family, embodied in a local church
    - Galatians 3:26-29
  - c. Baptism as God's Promise

- Baptism proclaims God's promise that Christ's death has become our own and that he has borne our judgment.
  - Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible grace – God uniting us to Christ in His death and resurrection, washing our sins away and clothing us with new garments of righteousness.
  - Acts 22:14-16; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:18-21
- d. Baptism and the Holy Spirit
- How are Baptism and the Holy Spirit related?
  - Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 10:47-48; 19:5-6; I Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13
- e. What about Infant Baptism?
- Though most churches in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada practice only believer's baptism, our Statement does allow for infant baptism
  - Our Statement of Faith is silent on both the time and mode of baptism as our forebears determined that it would not be an essential point of doctrine over which they would separate from other Christians
  - Acts 16:15,33; 1 Corinthians 1:16-17; 7:14
2. The Lord's Supper
- The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's death, practiced in the fellowship of the Body.
  - Jesus told his followers to celebrate the Lord's Supper until His return as a symbolic picture (memento of Himself) that would help us keep in mind what he has done for us.
  - Matthew 26:28-29; 1 Corinthians 11:22-26; Acts 2:42

***“God's gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.”***

#### Article 8

#### Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

## I. Grace and Godliness: God's Justifying Grace and His Sanctifying Power and Purpose

- We believe that salvation is a gift from God through faith in Christ. However, believers are called to obedience to Christ; hence, salvation is always followed by sanctification (I John 2:1-6). God's grace in the gospel compels us to seek godliness (Titus 2:11-12, 14)
- Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God in our lives to make us like Jesus in character and living.
- Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; Colossians 3:17, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 11:6; 12:1, 14; James 2:15-17; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:18

## II. The Great Commandment

### A. *We are to Love God Supremely*

- ...with all our heart, soul and mind.
- Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27; John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:9-10; 1 John 4:8-16

### B. *We are to Love Others Sacrificially*

- ...love your neighbor as yourself
- Matthew 5:44-48; 12:38-39; John 13:34; Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 3:16; 4:20

#### 1. Caring for One Another

- John 13:35; Acts 4:32, 34-35
- The New Testament includes a number of "one another" passages that outline how believers are to treat each other: Romans 12:1; Romans 12:16/I Peter 3:8; Romans 14:13; Romans 15:7, Romans 15:14; 2 Corinthians 13:12; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32; 5:19, 21; Colossians 3:13/Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; I Peter 1:22; I Peter 4:9; I Peter 5:5

#### 2. Acting with compassion Toward the Poor

- We take this to include any who are needy, powerless and vulnerable, such as widows and orphans, the elderly, the disabled, the unborn, the immigrant, the minority or the mistreated (Zechariah 7:10; Luke 14:13)
- Deuteronomy 15:11; Psalm 82:3-4; Psalm 140:12; Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17; 22:9; 28:27; 29:7; 31:8-9; Galatians 2:10; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 14:12-14; James 1:27

#### 3. Seeking Justice for the Oppressed

- Exodus 23:6; Leviticus 19:15; Psalm 68:5; 82:3-4; 140:12; Proverbs 21:3; 22:22-23; 23:10-11; 29:7; 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:16-17; Jeremiah 9:24; 22:16; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9-10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 4:18

## III. The Spiritual Battle

### A. *Our Duty: To Combat the Spiritual forces of Evil*

- Being a follower of Jesus means that we will be engaged in a struggle, a fight, a battle. Our battle is a spiritual battle for the heart and mind (Ephesians 6:1-18), but we have spiritual resources at our disposal.
- John 16:33; Ephesians 6:12; Philippians 1:29-30; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 5:19

### B. *Our Means*

- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

#### 1. God's Word

- Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:11,12,17; 1 John 5:3-4

#### 2. The Spirit's Power

- Luke 10:17-19; Acts 2:14-21,38; 9:17-18; Romans 8:26; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 4:4; 5:18; Revelation 12:10-11

3. Fervent Prayer in Christ's Name

- John 14:14;16:24; Romans 8:34; 15:30; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 7:23-25

**C. *Our Confidence: In Jesus Christ Our Victory is Assured***

- John 16:33; Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:13-15; I John 4:4; Revelation 12:10-11

**IV. The Great Commission: We are to Make Disciples**

- The "Great Commission" was Jesus' call to make disciples. It includes a promise that Jesus will be with us as we obey.
- Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21

**A. *Among All People***

- Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Revelation 7:9-10

**B. *By Bearing Witness to the Gospel in Word and Deed***

- Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:12

**“God’s gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself  
at the end of this age.”**

## Article 9

## Christ’s Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when he will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role of Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

## I. The Nature of Christ’s Return

### A. A Personal Return

- There will be no mistaking that Jesus Himself will return, not a spiritual force, or an idea or a new form of government. Every knee will bow and every tongue will proclaim Him as Lord.
- Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:4-7

### B. A Bodily Return

- Matthew 24:27, 30; 26:63-64; I Thessalonians 4:15-17

### C. A Glorious Return

1. Christ Will Come with His Holy Angels
  - He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment. Jesus’ invisible kingdom and angels will become visible with power.
  - Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; II Thessalonians 1:6-10
2. Christ will Come as King
  - Jesus comes as the legitimate King (Matt 1:1; 22:41-46; Luke 1: 31-33; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8; Revelation 5:5) and as a fulfillment of God’s promise to King David
  - Matt 25:32; 1 Corinthians 15:22-25; Revelation 19:16
3. Christ Will Come as Judge
  - Jesus will judge sin, evil and injustice as well as their perpetrators.
  - Matthew 3:12; 13:24-30, 40-43; 25:31-47; Acts 17:30-31; 10:39-42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:11-21

## II. The Time of Christ’s Return

### A. Is Known Only to God

- Matthew 24:30-36, 42; Mark 13:26-32; 1 Timothy 6:13-15

#### 1. There are a number of key views regarding the return of Christ.

##### a. Premillennialism

- Premillennialists hold that Jesus returns and institutes a literal one thousand year reign. Some premillennialists believe that Jesus gathers the church before the tribulation (pre-tribulational rapture) while others hold that Jesus gathers the church mid-way through the tribulation (mid-tribulational rapture) and still others that He gathers the church at the end of the tribulation (post-tribulational rapture).

##### b. Amillennialism

- Amillennialists believe that there is no literal thousand year reign of Jesus on earth and that Christ’s kingdom is a present, spiritual rule already established in the hearts and minds of believers.

##### c. Postmillennialism



- Postmillennialists hold that the millennial state is inaugurated through the triumph of the gospel in the world and that Jesus returns at the end of this triumph of Christianity to usher in the eternal state.
2. While early EFCC founders were premillennialists and most held to a pre-tribulational rapture, the EFCC stand, given that only the Father knows the exact sequence of events and timing of Jesus' return, is such that we will not disassociate from any Christian based on his or her differing belief on the timing of Jesus' return

*B. Demands Constant Expectancy*

- While we are not sure of the exact time of Jesus' return, we do hold that He could return at any moment. This sense of immanency ought to encourage the believer in life and faith.
- Matthew 24:37-51; Luke 12:40; Romans 13:11-14; I Thessalonians 5:1-11; James 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 3:3;

#### **IV. The Effect of Christ's Return**

*A. Our Blessed Hope*

- Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:4; 1 John 3:2

*B. A Motivation for the Believer*

- The return of Christ as Lord and Judge ought to move us to live differently than those without hope
- Jesus' return gives us reason to live godly lives, to serve Him and others sacrificially and to invest our lives in carrying out a mission that brings purpose
- Matthew 24:45-46; 25:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:10-14; I John 2:28; 3:2-3; Revelation 22:7, 12

**“God’s gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.”**

Article 10

Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

**I. God’s Gospel Requires a Response**

*A. God Commands us to Respond*

- The character of God and His gospel demand a response from His creation.
- We either accept or reject the good news – we cannot simply ignore it.
- Mark 1:15; John 6:29; 8:24; 11:25-26; 14:1; 20:31, Acts 16:31; Romans 3:22; 1 John 3:23

*B. The Gospel Addresses Everyone Everywhere*

- Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 17:30; Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28; Revelation 5:9

*C. We are to Believe the Gospel*

1. We are to Turn to God in Repentance

- Repentance implies turning away from sin and turning toward God, aligning oneself within the moral order which God has established
- Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 13:3; 24: 46-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 14:15; 17:30; 20:21; 26:17-18, 20; Romans 2:3-4; 9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 2 Peter 3:9

2. We are to Receive the Lord Jesus Christ

- John 1:12; 14:6; Acts 4:11-12; Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Colossians 2:6

**II. Our Eternal Destiny**

- The Gospel is a matter of eternal significance, for our eternal destiny hinges on our response to Jesus Christ
- Matthew 7:13-14; John 3:36; 5:24; 8:24

*A. God Will Raise the Dead Bodily*

- When a believer dies the body decays but the soul and spirit go immediately to be with God. The believer awaits the body’s resurrection to be with the Lord forever. This resurrection is what all people of faith have looked forward to
- Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 22:23-32; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:13

*B. God Will judge the World*

- Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 10:15; 11:22-24; 12:36; 41-42; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 4:13; Revelation 20:12-15; 21:27

1. The Destiny of the Unbeliever: Condemnation and Eternal Conscious Punishment

- At the final Great White Throne Judgment, unbelievers are judged and all evil is cast into the Lake of Fire
  - At the Great White Throne Judgment, those whose names are not found in the Book of Life (unbelievers) are condemned to the Lake of Fire
  - Unbelievers are consciously aware of their separation from God and punishment for eternity
  - Matthew 13:41-42; 23:33; John 5:25-29; Romans 2:7-8; Philippians 3:18-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-17; Jude 6-13; Revelation 14:9-11; 21:8
2. The Destiny of the Believer
- a. Eternal Blessedness and Joy with the Lord
    - Believers are those who have accepted Christ by faith.
    - After the resurrection of the body, Jesus rewards believers at the judgment seat of Christ
    - Matthew 13:43; 25:34; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 19:5-7
  - b. In the New Heaven and the New Earth
    - Heaven is an indescribable place where there are no tears and eternal joy in the presence of God
    - The new heaven and earth will finally undo the results of sin and the fall on the created realm
    - Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Romans 8:18-23; Hebrews 12:28; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 21:1-21

## **II. God's Final Purpose: To the Praise of His Glorious Grace**

- God is gracious and desires all to choose to join Him for eternity
- Ephesians 1:5-6, 12; 2 Peter 3:9-12; Revelation 7:10-12

## **III. Our Final Response: Amen!**