

## Chatham Community Church Beliefs

In presenting our beliefs, we keep in mind the following three principles:

- **In all essential beliefs—we have unity.**
- **In all non-essential beliefs—we have liberty.**
- **In all our beliefs—we show love.**

Our essential beliefs are as follows:

### **About God**

There is one God who is infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the mystery and unity of the one God there are three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father; yet each is truly Deity.

### **About God the Father**

God the Father is Creator of heaven and earth, and He daily sustains all His creation. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise and in His unfathomable grace gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for our redemption. He made all things for His joy and His glory, and He intends for people to live as His children.

### **About God the Son**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Eternally existing as God, Jesus became human, fully God and fully man; he was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of people by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven victorious and will return to earth again someday to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### **About God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for the Savior, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in every believer from the moment of conversion. He provides the Christ-follower with strength for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer gifts for service and empowers them for ministry. As followers of Jesus, we seek to live with the Spirit's help moment-by-moment as we journey through life.

### **About the Bible**

The Bible is God's self-revelation to His creation. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. The Bible is God-breathed and it is wholly true.

### **About Human Beings**

God made human beings in His image as the pinnacle of His creation. People were created to honor God and to enjoy a relationship with Him, but they rebelled and alienated themselves from God. This rebellion resulted in an inward depravity of all humans that is expressed in sinful attitudes and actions. All of us are marred by sin and are incapable of living out the full humanity for which we were created. Broken and sinful people, whatever their character or achievements, are lost and without hope apart from God's salvation.

### **About Salvation**

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it by faith. We can never make up for our sins by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ alone as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. Through Christ's atonement for sin, an individual is reconciled to God as Father, becomes His child, is forgiven of his sin, and is regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

The natural response of faith in Jesus is to turn from our self-ruled life and follow Jesus as Lord. Followers of Jesus are empowered by the Spirit to grow in relationship with Jesus, to become more like Him, and to carry out His ministry. This part of God's work in us is called sanctification. Ultimately, all believers will be glorified with Christ, sharing in His victory over sin and death.

### **About the Church**

The universal church, the body of Christ, consists of all those who have genuinely believed in Christ for their salvation, regardless of church or denominational affiliation. All members of the universal church are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. We believe that the local church is a gathering of believers in Jesus Christ who are joined together for the purposes of worship, prayer, observance of the ordinances, teaching, care, confession, relationships, training, serving, and evangelism.

The local church should be a witness to the contemporary world. In order to fulfill the mission of evangelism and discipleship of all nations, each local church should creatively adapt its ministry, worship, and teaching to the particular context in which God has placed the church.

### **About the Ordinances**

Jesus Christ commanded His followers to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper until he returns. Water baptism serves as a public identification with Jesus—a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's connection to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death and that he is now a new creation of God. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood as a payment for sins. As we celebrate the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we publicly remember the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body. The Lord's Supper is enjoyed by believers repeatedly as a sign of continued participation in the salvation benefits of Christ's death.

### **About Eternity**

We long for the future, physical, visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth.

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation in Christ or exist eternally separated from God by sin. Satan with his hosts and all those without Christ will finally be separated from the benevolent presence of God and will endure eternal punishment. Those whose hope is in Christ will live forever in glorified bodies without sorrow or suffering. These will reign with Christ, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the whole earth will worship the God Who makes all things new.