

NORTH PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH **STATEMENT OF FAITH & GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

(Rev. July 2nd, 2002)

DOCTRINE

The Bible

We believe that the Bible is inspired by God and that it is without error in the original Manuscripts. We believe that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God and that it stands alone as the vehicle for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Furthermore, we believe that the scriptures are to be interpreted in a contextual and literal way and that they are to be understood and applied personally as the believer is guided by the Spirit of God.

(II Timothy 3:16-17; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:21)

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect in all His attributes and eternally co-existing in three equal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; I John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:6; John 1:18; Hebrews 9:14).

Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man; born of a virgin and the only person to live a sinless life. Because of Christ's sacrifice, He is the substitute for the sinner and the one mediator who can affect the reconciliation between a Holy God in heaven and a sinful person on earth. He was buried and rose bodily from the dead and ascended to His Father's right hand, where He now ministers there as intercessor and advocate for us before the Father. Jesus, as He did on earth, continues to serve us as Friend and Lord, praying for us and defending us.

(I John 5:20; John 1:17; Matthew 1:23; I Timothy 2:5-6; Luke 1:35; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:22,24, 3:18; II Corinthians 5:18-19; I John 2: 1-2; Acts 2:31-32; Luke 24:39; Ephesians 1:20; John 15:12-15; Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:24)

Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts us of sin, of our need for righteousness and of judgment if we reject the Saviour, Jesus Christ. At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the 'family' of God or 'body' of Christ permanently and fully indwelling each Christian. The Holy Spirit's indwelling sets us apart for spiritual service and gives His gifts and power to help us live a godly life as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

Sin

We believe that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God and thus humans have great value in God's sight. But they sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. The consequences of this sin affect the entire human race so that all human beings are now born with a sinful nature and reveal this nature by committing acts of sin. Recognition of this condition, repentance and regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for the salvation of all people. Redemption is wholly by the blood of Christ and salvation is by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Each redeemed child of God possesses the assurance of eternal life.

(Gen 1:26, 27; Romans 3:23, 5:12-19; Isaiah 59:1-2; II Corinthians 4:3; John 1:12, 10:27-30; 5:24; 16:8-11; Acts 3:19; Luke 13:3; II Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:12-14; I Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:24-25)

Future

We believe in the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to take His church out of the world. His coming is the fulfillment of the blessed hope set before the believer. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the lost, eternal life with God of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

(Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:14-18; Titus 2:13; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:12-13; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 22:4-5; Revelation 20:10-15; II Thessalonians 1:8-10).

The Church

We believe that the church universal, the body of Christ is not an organization, but a living organism comprised of all believers seeking to mature in their relationship with Christ. The local church is the expression in any locality of the church universal. It is composed of believers who are gathered as a corporate testimony to the Lordship of Christ and to the oneness of the body of Christ. They gather by the leading of the Holy Spirit, for worship, for prayer, for fellowship, for communion, for edification and evangelism. Within the body of Christ there is also a diversity expressed by special abilities given to each believer by God. These spiritual gifts enable a believer to function especially well in areas of service for the good of the body; thus there are no superiors or inferiors in the body of Christ. Our position is that government and discipline are the responsibilities of this local church.

(Ephesians 1:22-23; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 18:20; John 17:20-21; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-30; Romans 8:14; Philippians 3:3; Acts 2:42; II Timothy 4:2-5; Ephesians 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28; Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 12:1-31; Titus 1:5-9; Heb 10:25).

MARRIAGE

At North Park, we believe that the principles basic to understanding a Christian marriage between two believers, a man and a woman, are found in scripture. This precludes homosexual, common-law or any sexual relationship outside the marriage covenant. (Rom.1:26 & following).

Gen. 2:18-24 provides a foundation, which is supported by other scriptures in both the Old and New Testament, for the following principles:

Marriage is-

Established by God (Gen. 2:18) as monogamous (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 18:5); permanent (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:6); exclusive (Gen. 2:24); with sex being reserved for marriage between a man and a woman only, rather than before or outside of marriage. (1 Cor. 6:18-20 ; Eph. 5: 3)

Blessed of God (Gen. 2:18; Gen. 1:31) with implications that it be respected; esteemed highly (1 Cor. 7:38) and regarded as honorable (Heb. 13:4). The celibate life can also be a valid choice (I Cor. 7:2; I Cor. 7:7).

A partnership of a man and a woman, recognizing it as being a covenant relationship between two individuals which is planned by God (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 12: 1-2); for companionship (Gen. 2:18; Mal. 2:14); complementary (Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:23); and implying care (Gen. 2:21,22; Eph. 5).

A timeless mystery involving leaving your family of origin, cleaving to the husband or wife and the two becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31).

For life (Rom. 7:2) in a relationship that is monogamous (Gen. 2:24); exclusive (Exod. 20:14; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:3) and permanent (Matt. 19:6; Malachi 2:16).

Becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31, Mark 10:8-9) through the physical union of a man and woman. Through the total union of a man and a woman, body, soul and spirit, the two become one. This is the mystery of Christian marriage through Christ. (Eph. 5:31-33)

The scriptures help us to understand the roles and responsibilities of men and women in a marriage relationship. While there are differences between men and women as well as differing descriptions of what it means to be a husband or wife, women are recognized as the spiritual and intellectual equals of men. Ephesians 5 is probably the best-known New Testament passage regarding this matter. In this chapter Paul describes mutual submission as the characteristic attitude of Christian men and women who submit to the Lord as well as to one another. The husband is called to lead and is challenged to love his wife as Christ loved, and loves, the church. Paul focuses on the husband's responsibility to have a self-giving love for his wife. Wives are encouraged to respond to their husbands in the same way that they submit to Christ. Mutual submission between husband and wife (Eph. 5:21) rules out positions of domination, privilege, condescension, fear-based withdrawal, codependency, irresponsibility, power struggles. (Gen. 3:12) The church takes seriously acts of physical and/or emotional abuse.

DIVORCE

At North Park we believe that the marriage relationship is for life while recognizing that there are some instances where divorce is allowed.

Divorce, unfaithfulness, adultery and coveting another man's wife were not the divine pattern in the Old Testament (Malachi 2:14-16; Exodus 20:14; 20:17; Deut.5:18, 21. God permitted divorce but did not prescribe it (Deut. 24:1). Jesus confirmed this in Matt. 19:3-9. Adultery and sexual immorality are not to be part of the marriage relationship (Heb. 13:4). The only acceptable reason that Jesus gave for ending a marriage was marital unfaithfulness (Matt. 5:9). If anyone divorces his wife, except for this reason, causes her to commit adultery and anyone who marries her also commits adultery. Christian husbands and wives are to remain married until death

(I Cor. 7:10-11). If the husband or wife leaves for reasons other than adultery, he/she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled with one another. When Christian couples experience difficulties in their marriage they should work out their differences in an attitude of mutual love and respect for one another, following the example of Christ's sacrificial love for the church.

Believers are also instructed not to marry non-believers (I Cor. 6:14) If a believer marries a non-believer (1 Cor. 7: 12-14), we believe that a Christian wife or husband must not initiate a divorce if the unbeliever is content to stay married. If the unbelieving spouse leaves and divorces their partner (1 Cor. 7:15-16) the marriage bond is broken and the believer may remarry. In the case of divorced non-believers who both become Christians, they may marry and enter into a Christian marriage with all the rights and responsibilities associated with their new position in Christ.

BAPTISM

At North Park, we believe in and practise believer's baptism, through immersion in water, as commanded by Christ (Matt. 28:19). This occurs after one has confessed their sin and professed faith in Jesus Christ, and thus is born into a new life through the Holy Spirit in Christ (Acts 2:41, 8:12).

The word baptism comes from a Greek word - baptizo: to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to cleanse by submerging. A good example of this word, from everyday life, occurs in the process of dying cloth, where the cloth is immersed (baptised) in dye, which permanently changes its colour. When we come to know Christ, we are baptised in the Holy Spirit, which permanently changes us — we become a new creation in Him (Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor 5:17).

Water baptism is a public proclamation that symbolically demonstrates what has happened to us when Christ came into our life. We are first lowered into the water, symbolizing that we have died and are buried with Christ. We are then raised out of the water, symbolizing that we have been resurrected with Christ to new life (Romans 6:3-4).

Although as a church we believe in and practise believers' baptism, we do not exclude in any way those who believe differently. Membership, with all its privileges and responsibilities, is open to all who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and trust only in Him to be their Saviour and Lord.

COMMUNION

On the night before Jesus was crucified, during the celebration of the Passover meal, He commanded His followers to repeatedly remember His suffering and death through the symbols of bread and wine. The eating of this meal was to be a regular reminder of the New Covenant of grace that God was offering to His people. Believing this to be an ordinance of the Lord to be followed until He returns, the church universal has consistently celebrated this event known as the Lord's Supper. During the first service of each month, time is given at North Park's weekend worship services to reflect upon Christ's sacrificial love for us as Christian believers partake of the bread and the cup. We believe the bread to be a symbol of the body of Christ which was broken for us and the wine (grape juice) to be a symbol of the blood of Christ spilled out at Calvary for the forgiveness of sins.

We recognize this to be a deep privilege offered to those who are followers of Christ and as such believe each time we partake of the bread and the wine we ought to do so carefully, thoughtfully and jubilantly. The apostle Paul reminded the church at Corinth that before they ate of the Lord's Supper they should examine themselves reflecting upon their relationship with the Lord and with one another. Should there be unconfessed and unrepentant sin, it would be inappropriate to eat of the Lord's Supper.

We encourage people to carefully examine their lives and relationships before they eat of the Lord's Supper and to use those times and opportunities for healing of relationships between them and God. We encourage parents to make sure their children are old enough to understand the symbolic importance of the Lord's Supper and to understand its value in their lives. It is our prayer that each Christ follower will participate in the Lord's Supper with reverence and awe experiencing in ever increasing measure the grace of God.

(Matthew 26:17-25; Luke 22:14-23; I Corinthians 11:17-34)

MEMBERSHIP

Purpose of Membership:

Each member of NPCC is a member of this local body of Christ, and as such has a unique function within the body (1Cor12:27-30). Therefore each member should perform their function by: praying for fellow members and the church at large; serving their fellow members and the church in accordance with their giftedness; and contributing financially to the ongoing work of NPCC, proportionate to their individual income and resources.

Membership gives an individual formal identification and full participation in this local Body of Christ, and enables NPCC to fully minister to individual members through care, council, encouragement, discipleship, discipline, and restoration. Membership is also an important aspect in our compliance with the laws of the Province of Ontario, and the Dominion of Canada which govern our operation as a charitable corporation.

Eligibility for Membership:

An applicant for membership must be at least 18 years of age, must be a follower of Jesus Christ and trust in Him only, for their right standing before God. Members should strive to live a godly life in obedience to scripture, agree to our **Statement of Faith**, and comply with our policies on various moral and ethical issues included in this book, particularly the policy dealing with marriage and sexuality.

Process to Become a Member:

It is recommended that all applicants for membership take a membership orientation class at some point before or during the process outlined below:

1. Inquiry by applicant.
2. Applicant completes a membership application form, including a written testimony, which is forwarded to the Members Care Council.
3. Applicant is given a copy of the **Statement of Faith & Guiding Principles** document to study and discuss with Members Care Council representatives.
4. Applicant is visited by Members Care Council representatives. Agreement to, and compliance with our **Statement of Faith** and our policies on various moral and ethical issues included in this book, particularly the policy dealing with marriage and sexuality is established.
5. Members Care Council forwards recommendation to board of Elders.
6. Board of Elders approve, postpone or reject applicant for membership.
7. The new member is publicly recognized and welcomed into membership at their usual service of attendance.

Policy Regarding Termination of Membership:

Membership may be terminated for any of the following:

- Member withdraws his or her membership.
- Member is continuously absent for a period of one year.
- The Board of Elders may revoke the membership of an individual, for willful sin on the member's part, and refusal to comply with the discipline and restoration offered to them by the Elders on behalf of NPCC.

A member will be notified in writing of the termination of their membership, by the Board of Elders.

Honorary Members:

A (voting) member who will be absent for long periods of time e.g. missionaries, shut-ins, may apply to the Board of Elders for honorary membership. An honorary member shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the members of the Church.

CHURCH GOVERNANCE, CORE VALUES AND GOALS

Church Governance:

London North Park Community Church is an independent non-denominational church, operating as a local church, and a not for profit corporation in the Province of Ontario. As such, North Park is independent of any external ecclesiastical authority, but is subject to the authority of God alone as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The responsibility and authority for leading and guiding North Park shall reside with the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will delegate certain areas of responsibility and authority to the Board of Deacons, Pastoral Staff, Administrative Staff, or other Boards of the church as it sees fit for the effective and efficient leading and operation of North Park.

Mission Statement:

To proclaim and practice the living Christ.

Vision Statement:

Meet, Mature and Mobilize.

North Park Community Church exists as a grace based worshipping community of believers committed to helping people MEET the Saviour, MATURE in their relationship with Him and MOBILIZE them to affect the world.

Our Core Values:

1. **BIBLICALLY FOCUSED:** Members shall be challenged to study and know the scriptures as the final and infallible authority for their life and practice.
2. **WORSHIP CENTRED:** Our worship shall encompass all ministries and have Christ as its centre.
3. **PRAYER EMPOWERED:** The church shall go forward on its knees as it seeks the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.
4. **LAY MINISTRY ACTIVATED:** The church is committed to equip and develop each member to be an effective lay minister within the body of Christ.
5. **EVANGELICALLY DRIVEN:** The church shall proclaim the gospel without reserve and without compromise.
6. **GRACE BASED:** The church shall represent a model of God's mercy with an openness to all who seek Christ's forgiveness and healing and will offer its ministry without reserve to persons and families alike who seek such ends.
7. **A CHRIST HONOURING LIFESTYLE:** Members shall be challenged to live as role models of Christ-likeness, exercising their giftedness as they extend grace to all, especially those who are disadvantaged economically, socially and spiritually.

Our goals:

1. To participate in the declaration of the gospel to the entire world as prescribed in the Great Commission and to purposely build up the body of Christ universal.
2. To provide regular seeker sensitive services with worship to God as the focus and preaching as the agent for proclaiming the gospel, teaching and admonishing believers to be more Christ-like.
3. To see that each individual participates in a small group which meets for mutual support, spiritual growth and service to the body as it fulfills the mission of the church.
4. To develop leaders and encourage the use of people's spiritual gifts in providing focused ministries which will mature believers, strengthen families and meet community needs.
5. To model and encourage our members to have Christ-like love for one another and to give compassionate care to the suffering and those deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter.
6. To integrate our Core Values into every program and ministry of the church.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Christ-followers realize that they have been bought with the price of Christ's blood, and that everything they are and have belongs to him. In light of this, they desire to be responsible caretakers of the material resources that God has entrusted to them. They recognize the tithe (10 percent of one's earnings) as the principle of giving; they increasingly submit their resources to His Lordship, and display a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness in supporting the work of the church. Scriptures strongly support that stewardship or giving is a means of bringing glory to God and is very much an act of worship.

Growing Christians give...

Generously... They know Christ has given to them everything they have, and they know Christ owns all that they have anyway. 2 Cor. 8:2-3, 2 Cor. 9:6

Proportionally... They try to give as high a percentage of their income as possible, recognizing the tithe (10 percent) as a principle which may well be exceeded as they prosper. Lev 27:30-33, 1 Cor 16:2

Regularly... As resources flow in, they offer the "first-fruits" back to God, honouring Him before any others. 1 Cor 16:2, Prov. 3:9

Locally... Knowing that they claim this church as their spiritual home, they support ministries from which they derive benefit. Phil 4:15-17, 1 Cor 9:3-11

Globally... As they are able, they go beyond giving to their own church and contribute to the cause of Christ globally. Acts 1:8, Rom 15:26-27, Luke 24:47

Cheerfully... Knowing that God sees the heart, they don't just give begrudgingly to an organization -- they give their offering as unto God himself; they do so willingly, and not under compulsion, but with joyful worship as their resources flow out to serve others. 2 Cor 9:7

Anonymously... They don't call attention to themselves when they give or expect their offering to produce an advantage in the church. Matt 6:1-4

Expectantly... Counting on God's promise of provision, they anticipate seeing God use their gift and know He will work in their own life -- including financially -- as they give. 2 Cor 9: 10-12, Mal 3:10, Luke 6:38

Sacrificially... The Corinthian church, in spite of great poverty, pleaded for the privilege of sharing with other believers. II Cor. 8: 3,4.