

OUR ESSENTIAL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Our mission is to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord given to the church through our local vision to help people meet and follow Jesus.

We recognize that within Christianity there are genuine and sincere believers who have differing views on various doctrines. There is a unifying body of essential beliefs that virtually all conservative evangelical Christians accept. We believe that in order to be a part of the family of Rock Creek Church, one should agree completely with this essential set of beliefs.

So, in essential beliefs we have unity.

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be inspired and the authoritative Word of God.

(2 Timothy 3:16)

God

We believe in one God eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Genesis 1:1, 26)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, fully God and fully man.

(John 1:1, 14)

Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ.

(John 14:16-17)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God.

(Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:23)

Salvation

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and that He rose victorious from the grave. All those who accept His gift of salvation by faith alone will be saved.

(John 3:16)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

The Church

We believe that there is one family of God comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We believe that the Scripture commands His children to gather in local assemblies called churches.

(Acts 2:42-47)

Christ's Return

We believe in the personal and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Eternity

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting joy of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

(John 5:28-29)

Ordinances

The Bible sets forth two ordinances: Baptism and Communion (The Lord's Supper)

Baptism

We believe that water baptism by immersion is the Biblical testimony of the professed believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 28:19-20)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Communion

We believe that those who partake of communion should be born-again believers and are walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We practice “close” communion, welcoming all born again believers to join with us in communion whether Rock Creek is your church family or not.

We believe this best honors our responsibility to fellowship with all believers as members of the body of Christ and allows each individual to be responsible for his or her faith and actions.

(I Corinthians 11:23-29)

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred from fertilization throughout the entire natural human life; and, as such, are to be protected, whether healthy, unhealthy or in need, they deserve our respect and care.

(Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 25:34-40)

Marriage and Home

We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sin.

(Genesis 2:18-24)

Our Gender

We believe that God created the human race male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is immoral and therefore sin.

(Genesis 1:27)

OUR NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

In non-essential beliefs we have liberty.

What makes some doctrines “important but non-essential”?

They are non-essential because evangelical Christians hold a variety of positions on them, but they are important because they determine the methods by which local & global ministry is performed.

While we have unity in the essentials, we have liberty in the non-essentials and respect other’s positions in the important but non-essential doctrines.

By “respect” we mean that if they hold a differing view, that they do so without belittling or criticizing the church and/or it's leadership for holding its position, that they not have a personal agenda to change the church's position, and that they not sidetrack the effectiveness of the church by becoming argumentative or divisive over the matter.

For people in key leadership positions, we require not only that they respect the church's positions, but those who hold them as well while protecting the unity of the church.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Prophecy:

We believe the ascension and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the throne of the Father proclaims His present rule and reign over the universe. His Kingdom is revealed here on earth through His body, the church, resulting in a glorious church and global harvest at the end of this age. He will be finally revealed through His personal, physical, and soon return. While there are differing views on how His return will unfold, we hold to the belief that we are all on the “welcoming committee not on the planning committee.”

Concerning Salvation and Predestination/Foreknowledge/Election:

We believe that salvation is by God's grace, through faith, and cannot be achieved by any works of man. We believe that while God is completely sovereign, man has a personal responsibility to respond in faith to the message of the gospel. We are completely comfortable with the tension and mystery that exists between these two truths of Scripture. While there are varying degrees on the specifics of this topic, we seek to avoid the extreme positions that are fatalistic leading to an empty passion for evangelism as well as the manipulative, man-centered approach that would attempt to do what God alone can do in drawing sinners to repentance.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Denominations and Church Affiliation:

We believe that true believers and the true church are not defined by denominational affiliations or associations. We believe that denominations and affiliations have value as long as they serve the mission of the church. We freely associate with any churches or ministry organizations with whom we have enough agreement to cooperate in ministry.

Concerning Interpretation of the Bible:

We believe inerrancy applies to the original manuscripts of the Bible and that any version of the Bible based on honest and solid scholarship is valuable. We reject the belief that only one version is the inspired Bible in the English language.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Charismatic Belief:

While Rock Creek is a Spirit filled church, we are not charismatic or pentecostal in theology or practice.

Concerning our specific differences with charismatic or pentecostal practices and beliefs:

1. We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the placing of the new believer into the body of Christ, not a second work of grace following salvation by which a person receives the Holy Spirit. We believe a person receives the Holy Spirit completely at salvation.
2. We believe the filling of the Holy Spirit is the Christian's allowing of the Holy Spirit to have control, not a filling in the sense of receiving the Spirit or part of the Spirit that was not there.
3. We believe that the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a historical first and marked the birth of the church, the body of Christ. We believe that it was at Pentecost that believers, for the first time in history, received the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Charismatic Belief:

4. We believe the phenomenon of speaking in tongues in the New Testament was the supernatural ability to speak an unlearned, though legitimate, foreign language. It was a sign from God used during the transitional period of time from the founding of the church to the completion of the written Word of God (the New Testament). We do not believe the modern phenomena of “speaking in tongues” fits the New Testament description. While many sincere believers practice “speaking in tongues” as they understand it, we do not practice speaking in tongues in our services or ministries.

5. We believe God's revelation is complete in the Bible and reject the charismatic view of on-going revelation through tongues, or visions, or a gift of knowledge. We believe the Holy Spirit gives on-going illumination of the meaning of the Bible and that God gives “leading” by His Spirit and His providential control of circumstances.

6. We believe God is able to do any miracle and is able to heal anyone He chooses. We believe in asking God for miracles and for healing. We do not believe Christians today possess the gifts of miracles and healing.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Baptism:

We believe water baptism is the prescribed method the Lord gives for new believers to express their new faith in Him and identification with Him. We do not believe baptism is an automatic entry into a local church. We do not believe any denomination or authorizing body has exclusive rights to baptism. We do not believe baptism is a requirement for salvation, but is a matter of obedience to God. We believe salvation is by faith. We practice baptism by immersion.

Concerning Grace:

We believe Christian's are in a position of God's grace. This position includes God's total forgiveness of all sins and the impartation of Christ's righteousness to the Christian's "official record" with God. This position includes a total reconciliation to God where no works are required to earn God's favor. Christians do works of righteousness because they have God's favor, not to earn it. This grace also includes the active work of the Holy Spirit in the believer to desire and do God's will. God will certainly discipline His children to develop their maturity and to correct them. God's discipline is not a sign of God's rejection of His children, but an indicator that He loves them.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning the Church:

We believe we have a responsibility to extend the “right hand of fellowship” to all believers in the body of Christ. This involves a love and appreciation for them as true brothers and sisters in Christ. We do not believe any denomination or association constitutes the official church or churches. We believe the local church is the planned instrument of God to carry out the Great Commission. Therefore, we believe every believer should be a part of a local church and its efforts in ministry. We believe our job is to be an effective church and to do our part to multiply new churches as God leads.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Clergy:

We believe God calls some to serve His Church in vocational ministries as pastors and various other ministries. While recognizing the immense value of women serving in pastoral roles in the ministry, we believe the New Testament clearly teaches that the Senior/Lead Pastor & Elder role to be filled by men. We believe the Bible teaches that it is right and ethical for the church to financially support vocational ministers so their needs are met and so they may focus their attention upon the ministry. We also believe pastors/elders are to be given respect and honor as they are given responsibility and authority for the spiritual well being of the Lord's Church. We believe all Christians are “priests” and have direct access to God and do not need pastors/elders to mediate for them with God. The role of pastors/elders is to teach, lead, and give oversight to the church and its ministries.

Concerning Spiritual Gifts:

We believe God gives spiritual gifts or divinely empowered abilities to minister in the church. Each believer has gifts that are to be used and strengthened. God has a calling on each believer's life to serve others, thereby advancing the overall plan of God.

NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Concerning Tithing:

We believe that the primary purpose of tithing in the Old Testament was to support the “work” and the “workers” (priests and spiritual servants) of the Temple. We believe that the New Testament defines tithing in the church age as the appropriate means of supporting pastors and ministers of the Gospel, as well as the ministry of the church.

Our ultimate goal is to obey the Lord and fulfill the mission He gave us of making disciples. We believe we can do that best by having a balanced approach to doctrinal agreement and differences. We avoid the extreme of requiring everyone's absolute agreement on every teaching position the church holds because it unnecessarily separates some Christians from us who should be working with us in our mission. We avoid the extreme of taking no position outside of the essentials because it would leave us without a framework for how we do ministry as well as create an atmosphere of argumentation instead of love and service.