Statement of Faith

ANNEX 1

This document is a concise summary of the foundational doctrines of the faith that we confess. May these beliefs be the bond of our fellowship, the strength of our unity, the catalyst of our mission, and may they fuel our worship for our all-glorious God.

River of Life CHURCH

We Stand Together for the Gospel of Jesus Christ

At River of Life (RoL) Church we acknowledge the reality that in Jesus's church we do not all agree on certain doctrines, a fact that is even more pronounced within an international church. Very often the way we act and speak to one another about doctrinal differences can be divisive, hurtful to one another and to the witness of the gospel.

Our prayer is that River of Life Church is a community where the unity of Christ's church and the beauty of the gospel is valued more than non-essential doctrinal differences that stand apart from salvation. We want be known as a community that is transformed by the very gospel we preach. As we grow in the grace that God provides may we learn to welcome one another in the same way that Christ has welcomed us for God's glory.

In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity

We believe one of the most loving paths a church can take is for its leaders to clearly state the foundational doctrines affirmed. At RoL we desire to be open and transparent about what we believe. No community can learn to truly love one another without building a relationship on honesty, trust, transparency, and a willingness to meet hard conversations head-on with gospel-motivated love and grace.

We expect that all elders, deacons, and those who serve in leadership positions at River of Life Church will affirm this statement of faith, be willing to submit to the elders' leadership in these doctrines, and preserve the unity of the church by upholding this statement of faith.

We welcome into membership all who have come to a genuine faith in Jesus Christ recognizing some may have differing views from our leadership in matters of faith that are non-essential to salvation. We expect members to seek to preserve the unity of the church by holding these differing convictions without being divisive and seeking to honor the elders of the church.

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Contents

1 Holy Scriptures

2 Triune God

3 Creation

4 Sin

5 Salvation

6 The Church

7 God's Kingdom, Jesus's Return & Eternity

1 Holy Scriptures

We believe the Bible is God's very word given to us, the one true account of God and the world that He made. Consisting of 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, it was written by human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is given to us so that we might know and enjoy God and walk in His ways. It shows us the path to life and makes clear the path of sin and death. It is without error and completely true in all that it teaches. It is complete, final, and the supreme authority and standard by which we determine all matters of faith and practice.

2 Triune God

We believe there is only one living and true God. He is the eternal, infinite, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-wise Creator and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. He is merciful, just, and loving, governing all things according to His sovereign will for His glory alone. He is inexpressibly glorious, infinitely holy, and worthy of all of our worship, love, and trust.

We believe that God is one being, existing eternally as a unity of three distinct persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. Each person is fully, equally, eternally God, possessing the very same nature and attributes. In God's great work of redemption each member of the Trinity accomplishes a distinct but harmonious aspect of God's eternal plan to predestine, call, justify, and glorify sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

2.1 Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe that salvation from sin is only possible through the death of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners, and that forgiveness and new life are received by faith in His atoning work. We believe in His sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe that He died in our place for our sin, that He rose again, and that He ascended into heaven. We believe He loves and continually intercedes for His people. We believe His promise that He will return and establish His good rule and reign over all of the earth.

2.2 Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son to glorify Jesus Christ and convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates spiritually dead sinners, opening their hearts and minds to repent of their sin and to trust in Jesus for their salvation. Through the work of the Spirit believers are united to Christ and helped to understand their adoption into God's family with all of its many spiritual blessings. The Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the new covenant, the down payment of our promised inheritance, and an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. Beginning at the point of salvation the Holy Spirit indwells every believer, empowers them to love and live for Christ, enables them to be a witness of the gospel, and helps them persevere in the faith until they enter into God's final rest.

3 Creation

3.1 God's Good Creation

We believe that out of nothing God made the world and all that exists, speaking our world into existence through the power of His word. All that God created, and the divine order with which it was created, was very good, exactly as God intended.

3.2 Made in God's Image

We believe Adam and Eve were created in God's image, uniquely as male and female, to know Him, enjoy Him, reflect Him as His image bearers, and to rule over His creation.

4 Sin

4.1 The Fall of Man

We believe that, tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve sinned against God by willfully choosing to disobey His command. They ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and as a result, they experienced the guilt and shame of their sin in addition to being separated from the holy God who made and loved them. They fell from a state of perfect union with God and from the sinless nature they had been given.

4.2 Man's Sin Nature

We believe that as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, every member of the human race, at birth, inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law. Therefore, all humans are under condemnation. The effect of sin is radical and pervasive. It extends to the mind, will, body, and affections. Unregenerate humanity lives under the dominion of sin and Satan, who is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God.

5 Salvation

5.1 Gospel

We believe in the gospel, the good news that God has both rescued sinners from sin and reconciled them to Himself through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation from which they are incapable of saving themselves.

We believe that God, by His grace alone, has provided the only means for salvation through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We believe that God offers the gift of eternal life to all who believe in His Son and repent of their sin.

5.2 Grace

We believe that grace is the unmerited kindness God has shown us in Jesus Christ. God's grace serves to make Him alone glorious. No one is deserving of salvation, and no one can earn salvation. It is purely a gift of God so that no one can boast.

5.3 Justification

We believe that Jesus Christ was sinless and perfectly kept God's law. This made Him a spotless sacrifice, whose value was of infinite worth, acceptable in the eyes of a holy God, and able to atone for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross as our substitute, dying in our place, and receiving God's righteous wrath for our sins.

We believe that Jesus Christ through His sacrifice reconciled and restored us back into a right standing with God. By forgiving our transgressions and canceling our record of debt and its legal demands, God has declared guilty sinners righteous in His sight as a result of their union with Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ we have peace with God. We are no longer enemies of God, but friends.

5.4 Regeneration/New Birth

We believe that prior to salvation, sinners must be regenerated or born again through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who works to awaken in the sinner an awareness of their sin against a holy God, an understanding of truth of the gospel, and a willingness to cry out to God, confessing their sin and clinging to Jesus Christ.

5.5 Faith and Repentance

We believe the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration is seen in faith and repentance. By faith we mean a willful act to trust and believe in Jesus Christ's death for our sins. By repentance we mean a change in one's thinking, agreeing with God about one's sin that results in turning from self and sin and turning to God and righteousness.

5.6 Sanctification: New Life in Christ

We believe that all who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are given the Holy Spirit, the fulfillment of God's promise of a new covenant. He is the presence of God living in us and the power of God working within us to help us die to sin and live to God. Sanctification is a life-long process whereby God is daily transforming us and conforming us into the image of His Son.

6 The Church

We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of His church and that He rules over His church through His Spirit and His Word.

We believe that we, the church, are a people called out of the world to know and enjoy God, to be a community that is salt and light to the world around us, and to participate in His mission of taking the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ to every tongue, tribe, and nation.

We believe that we, the church, gather each week as a family of faith to fellowship, to worship, to devote ourselves to the Scriptures and prayer, to minister to one another using our spiritual gifts, and to be equipped for ministry within the church and for God's mission to those outside the church.

We believe that we, the church, scatter each week to be ministers of the gospel and ambassadors of Jesus in our routines at home, work, and everyday life. Our calling is to share the good news of God's love as God gives us opportunity and to make disciples of those whose hearts are open to the gospel.

6.1 Leadership: Elders

We believe that Jesus has given the local church shepherding elders to lovingly oversee His church and set an example for the flock. These elders are to be men, qualified by both character and gifting. Their calling is to devote themselves to prayer, the teaching of God's word, and the use of their spiritual gifts to edify, equip, and mature each member of the body for the work of the ministry.

6.2 The Ordinances: Baptism

We believe baptism, by immersion, was both modeled and commanded by Jesus Christ. We believe baptism is only for those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and that it should be pursued in a timely act of obedience. We understand baptism to be a joyful public expression of one's faith. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is a picture of dying to our old life and resurrecting to our new life in Jesus Christ.

6.3 The Ordinances: Communion

We believe celebrating communion was both modeled and commanded by Jesus Christ. It represents the new covenant between Jesus Christ and His bride, the church.

We believe the act of celebrating communion together is for the purpose of remembering the gospel and proclaiming Jesus Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and future return. Unlike baptism which is a one time act of obedience, the command to celebrate communion together is to be kept regularly and continually by His church until Jesus Christ's return.

7 God's Kingdom, Jesus's Return & Eternity

7.1 God's Glory and Eternal Kingdom

We believe that the goal of all history is God's glory and the establishment of His eternal kingdom over which He will execute His good and perfect rule over all things.

7.2 Jesus Christ's Return to Save and to Judge

We believe in and eagerly await the second coming of our Savior and King of Kings to earth in His full glory and power and the establishment of His eternal kingdom. His second coming will be sudden, personal, bodily, and visible to the whole world. God has not revealed the time of Jesus Christ's return, therefore, the setting of dates is fruitless and unbiblical speculation.

7.3 Resurrection from the Dead

We believe in the resurrection of the dead. Both the Old and New Testament teach of a bodily resurrection from the dead. The surety of this promise is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself, who was the first-fruits of God's resurrection power. Because death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have the assured hope that God will raise us from the dead, just as He raised Jesus Christ.

7.4 Hell and Judgment for Sin

We believe love should compel us to preach and teach the truth that hell is an eternal, never-ending suffering that comes from sins committed against a holy God. In hell, those who are not found in Jesus Christ at the time of their death, remain under condemnation for their sins, and are forever separated from God.