

Savannah Christian Church



Philosophy of Ministry

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PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

SCC exists to lead people to a life-changing connection with Jesus Christ.

(Matthew 22:36-38, 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20)

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a biblically functioning community of believers growing: deeper through worship; larger through evangelism; stronger through discipleship; warmer through fellowship; and broader through ministry. *(Acts 2)*

What We Value

1. We believe Jesus Christ is the son of God, the Leader of the Church, and the source of Eternal Life. *(Matthew 3:16-17, John 6:40, 14:6; Colossians 1:15-20)*
2. We believe in honoring Christ as the Head of the Church through authentic worship. *(John 4:23-24; Revelation 5:13-14)*
3. We believe that the Bible is God's life-changing message of truth to all people.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:23-25)
4. We believe that the Church must reflect God's love for lost people.
(Matthew 18:14; Luke 5:30-32; 15:1-32; John 3:16)
5. We believe the principles of the New Testament Church are the guiding influence in the shape of our Church. *(Acts 2, 17:11)*
6. We believe that the Church should communicate the truth in a relevant way.

(1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

7. We believe that the Church should be characterized by unity and compassion.
(1 Corinthians 13; John 13:34-35)
8. We believe in consistent, life-long spiritual growth.
(Acts 2:44-47; Ephesians 4:11-13)
9. We believe that loving God means giving Him our best.
(Genesis 4:2-5; Colossians 3:17 & 23)
10. We believe following Christ means a life of service to others.
(John 13:3-17; Philippians 2:3-5)
11. We believe in building healthy, God-honoring relationships.
(Matthew 22:39-40; Luke 6:12-13, Acts 2:44-47; Ephesians 5:21-6:4)
12. We believe in a courageous life of full devotion to Christ.
(Acts 13:33; Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 2:1-11)

DOCTRINAL TRUTHS

1. **We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, God in human form. We believe that the virgin-born Son of God died for our sins, was buried, rose from the dead and is coming again. We believe He is both fully God and fully man.**

Philippians 2:5-7, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

John 14:9, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

John 8:58, "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

John 1:1, 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Colossians 2:9, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

2. **We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, the written record of His supernatural revelation of Himself to man, absolute in its authority, complete in its revelation, final in its content and without any error in its teaching.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, [17] so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. [21] For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. "

3. **We believe in the historical creation of man.**

Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

4. **We believe in the sanctity of life and that life begins at conception.**

Psalms 139:13-16, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days.....

5. **We believe that all men are born with a sin nature.**

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

6. **We believe in the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that the homosexual lifestyle is outside of God's plan for His people.**

Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Jer 29:6, "Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease."

Isa 62:5 "As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."

Le 18:22, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."

Le 20:13, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable."

7. We believe in the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind.

Isaiah 53:3-6, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. [6] We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

8. We believe in the literal, bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead as prophesied.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. [2] By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. [3] For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

9. We believe in the literal return of Christ as promised.

John 14:1-6, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. [4] You know the way to the place where I am going." [5] Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" [6] Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud

command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. [18] Therefore encourage each other with these words."

2 Peter 3:3-4, 10, 13, "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. [4] They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ... [10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare....[13] But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

10. We believe in the assignment of all people to heaven or to hell at their time of death or at the time of Christ's return.

Hebrews 9:27, "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9] They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power."

Revelation 20:15, "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. [7] We live by faith, not by sight. [8] We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. [9] So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

11. We believe that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life are promised to those who trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast."

12. We believe that those putting their trust in Christ should repent of their sins, confess their faith, and be baptized into Him.

Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Acts 2:38-39, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.' "

Romans 6:3-4, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

- a. We do not administer baptism to infants or to children who have not confessed faith in Christ, nor do we baptize by any mode other than immersion.
- b. We would ask any believer who has not been baptized by immersion to submit to that New Testament form before becoming a member of Savannah Christian Church.

13. We believe that those who receive Christ also receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit: He marks them as the possession of God, manifests the fruit of righteousness in their character, and endows them with spiritual gifts for ministry.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, [22] set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

Galatians 5:22-23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

1 Corinthians 12:4-6, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. [6] There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."

14. We believe that a spiritual gift is a special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer, to be used to minister to others and thereby build up the Body of Christ.

1 Peter 4:10, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Romans 12:6-8, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. [7] If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; [8] if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. [8] To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, [10] to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

- a. We believe that in New Testament churches which were led by Apostles or by those specially empowered by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, miraculous gifts were manifested.

Acts 2:43, "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles."

Acts 8:18, "Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands..."

2 Timothy 1:6, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

- b. We believe that in New Testament churches which lacked direct apostolic leadership, non-miraculous gifts prevailed: The miraculous gifts were not present.

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17, "Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. [6] When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. [7] With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. [8] So there was great joy in that city...[14] When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. [15] When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, [16] because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [17] Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

- c. While we believe that God continues to answer prayer and work miracles, today, we do not expect to see the miraculous spiritual gifts manifested in the church because of the lack of apostolic leadership.
- d. We ask that those who seek the miraculous gifts (e.g. speaking in

tongues) not practice those gifts within our worship services or promote the exercise of those gifts among our members.

15. **We believe that the pattern of the New Testament was to observe the Lord's Supper each week.**

Acts 20:7, "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread."

16. **We believe that each believer should give a generous, intentional, regular, proportional gift of his or her income to God, through the local church, as a spiritual discipline. We believe that the tithe (one-tenth) is the standard by which Christians determine if they are giving generously.**

Malachi 3:10, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

1 Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income...."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. [7] Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

17. **We believe that God answers prayer, occasionally in miraculous ways. We believe prayer is a spiritual discipline that should be taught and learned within the Body of Christ.**

Acts 1:14, "They all joined together constantly in prayer."

Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

1 John 5:14-15, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him."

18. **We believe the Church is a body of Christ-followers who should live in community and enjoy the connection possible in the fellowship of small groups.**

Acts 2:44-47, "All the believers were together and had everything in common.[45] Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. [46] Every day they continued to meet

together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, [47] praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

- 19. We believe the "will of God" is discerned through the direct teaching of the Scriptures as well as through prayer, wise counsel, and a careful consideration of circumstances.**

Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."

Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

James 4:13-15, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' [14] Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. [15] Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'"

Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. [2] Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

- 20. We believe that we are "Christians only," but not the only Christians.**

John 10:14-16, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

- 21. We believe the Church should seek unity with all believers in matters essential to the universal Christian faith, and contend for liberty in all matters wherein the Lord has not spoken through His Word.**

Ephesians 4:2-6, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. [3] Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. [4] There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- [5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

- 22. We believe the local church is an autonomous body which cooperates with many Christian agencies but is regulated or dominated by none.**

Ephesians 5:23b, "Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior."

- 23. We believe love is to be shown to all people as the central trait of the Christian faith.**

John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Peter 4:8, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

- 24. We believe the mission of the church is to reach the spiritually lost for Christ, to teach with the goal of "forming Christ in them" and then to mobilize believers to accomplish God's purposes in the world.**

Matthew 28:18-20, "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' "

- 25. We believe that full devotion to Jesus Christ is normal for every Christian.**

Matthew 16:24-27, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. [26] What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? [27] For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.' "

POSITION ON BAPTISM

- 1. We can only do what the Bible says and follow the example the Bible sets for us:**

The Bible establishes that salvation is a transaction between God and a penitent sinner. It results from the sinner's faith in and confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the attendant forgiveness made possible by His death and resurrection. There is no third-party human involved in the transaction, and no third-party human is placed in the role of judging whether the sinner and the Savior have completed the essentials of their transaction.

- 2. The Bible is consistent and clear about the "transaction" of salvation.**

The Bible provides a consistent pattern in the New Testament that includes baptism by immersion with the repentance, faith, and confession that accompany the transaction of salvation. We emphasize the importance of baptism because of the New Testament pattern. We therefore believe and teach that baptism should follow the sequence of (1) repentance from sin, (2) faith in Christ, and (3) confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Our emphasis on baptism is manifested by our stipulation that it must take place before membership in the congregation can be established.

3. We do not assume that a person who declines baptism is categorically a lost soul in need of salvation.

We teach that such a person either does not understand the New Testament teaching on baptism, or has chosen to disregard it. Because the New Testament does not address the concept of an unbaptized believer after the resurrection of Christ, we leave the judgment of the state of their salvation to the One who knows the hearts of men and makes the entries in the Book of Life.

4. As a church we are called to be true to what we believe. Therefore, we ask that anyone who would join our church membership be baptized.

Because of the New Testament teaching, we conclude that believers should submit to baptism, and that refusal to submit indicates there is a significant issue that must be resolved in the heart of the person before we can extend an invitation to them to join the congregation.

5. Regarding the relationship between baptism and salvation, we conclude:

- that forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life are available to those who trust Christ as Lord and Savior (John 13 :16)
- that anyone seeking salvation should repent from their sins, confess their faith in Jesus Christ, and be baptized into Him (Romans 10:9, Acts 2:38)
- that any view of baptism should be built on the basis of a careful study of the related passages in the New Testament
- that baptism should not be a source of controversy or division among believers.

6. Baptized members should not judge the status of those who are not; those who are not should follow the Lord's teaching on baptism if they truly desire Jesus to be Lord of their life.

Each of us, if driven to do so, should settle for ourselves our precise position regarding the sequencing and timing of baptism in relation to the salvation offered by God. Then, having done so, we should move beyond such issues of the cradle to the much more significant issues of maturity and holiness the Lord desires we nurture in our lives.

TEAM ASSUMPTIONS

The following Team Assumptions apply to all Management, Support Staff, and Pastoral Teams.

1. We will consistently work to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3), recognizing that the overall ministry of SCC is greater than the individual ministries for which we are each personally responsible.
2. We will share concerns only with the appropriate people...i.e., those who are part of the problem or part of the solution! (Matthew 18:15-17)
3. We will strictly maintain confidentiality.
4. We will only speak positively of others on staff.
5. We will maintain the highest standards of integrity. (Proverbs 11:1 - "The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight.")
6. We will reflect integrity in the total of hours worked (not including personal lunch breaks, etc.), averaging a minimum of 50 hours per week for staff pastors.

Leaders are not the exception; we are the example.

7. We will submit expenses only for calls, lunches and purchases that we deem necessary to the conduct of church business, and we will submit mileage for the same (not to include the daily commute to and from the church).
8. We will always reflect a commitment to purity and to the sanctity of marriage; therefore, our relations with others will never include flirting, kissing, inappropriate touching, or participating in or supporting lifestyle choices that would include any homosexual behaviors. Except in emergency situations, we will never travel alone with a member of the opposite sex.

9. Because we believe that life begins at conception and is ordained by God, we do not support abortion under any circumstances.
10. We will be faithful in daily prayer and Bible study.
11. We will seek to set a high standard by abstaining from gambling, the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, vulgarity, pornography and conduct inappropriate of a Christian leader.
12. We will consistently give at least 10% of all personal income to God's work through SCC.

Statement of Understanding

I have read the *Philosophy of Ministry* of Savannah Christian Church, including the *Doctrinal Truths, Position on Baptism, and Team Assumptions* statements.

- I agree with all positions as presented.
- I agree with all positions as presented with exceptions (see below).

Exceptions:

Applicant

Date