

Statement of Faith

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was (a) written by men controlled by the Holy Spirit; (b) that it was truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and (c) therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

(EXPLANATORY)

1. By "*The Holy Bible*," we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not merely contain and convey the word of God, but *is* the very Word of God.
2. By "*Inspiration*" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.
 - (a) II Tim. 3:16–17; II Pet. 1:19–21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25
 - (b) Psa. 119:160; Psa. 119:105; Psa. 119:130; Luke 24:25–27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44–45
 - (c) Psa. 119:89; Prov. 30:5–6; Rom. 3:4; I Pet. 1:23; Rev. 22:19; John 12:48; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psa. 19:7–11; John 5:45–47; John 5:39

THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is (a) one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; (b) inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; (c) that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

- (a) Ex. 20:2–3; Gen. 17:1; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; Psa. 83:18; Psa. 90:2; Jer. 10:10
- (b) Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim. 1:17; Rom. 11:33; Mark 12:30
- (c) Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4–6; I John 5:7; John 10:30; John 17:5; Acts 5:3–4; I Cor. 2:10–11; Phil. 2:5–6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a divine person; (a) equal with God the Father and (b) God the Son and (c) of the same nature; (d) that He was active in the creation; (e) that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; (f) that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; (g) that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; (h) that He is the agent in the New Birth; (i) that He seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. And that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) is the evidence of His indwelling rather than the speaking in tongues and other spectacular demonstrations.

- (a) John 14:16–17
- (b) Matt. 28:19
- (c) Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35
- (d) Gen. 1:1–3
- (e) II Thess. 2:7
- (f) John 16:8–11
- (g) John 15:26–27; Acts 5:30–32;
- (h) John 3:5–6
- (i) Eph. 1:13–14; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16;

Luke 24:49; John 16:13; John 14:26; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:16; II Thess. 2:13;
I Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:26–27; Gal. 5:22–23; Eph. 5:18–21

SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification has a twofold meaning: (a) that of setting apart of things, days, or persons specifically for God, and that the believer at the time of his regeneration is so set apart by God the Father; (b) the progressive work of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer, obedient to the Word of God experiences the power of the indwelling Christ for holiness of life and victory over the old nature, which work will be completed when the believer stands in Christ's presence.

- (a) I Cor. 1:30; Heb. 10:10, 14
- (b) Col. 1:26–28; John 17:17; I Thess. 5:23; II Cor. 3:18

THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that Satan was once (a) holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and (b) drew after him a host of angels; that he is now (c) the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. (d) We hold him to be man's great tempter, (e) the enemy of God and His Christ, (f) the accuser of the saints, (g) the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; (h) the Lord of the Antichrist, and (i) the author of all powers of darkness, destined however (j) to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and (k) to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

- (a) Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:14–17
- (b) Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4
- (c) Eph. 2:2; John 14:30
- (d) I Pet. 5:8; I Thess. 3:5; Matt. 4:1, 3
- (e) Zech. 1:3; I John 3:8; Matt. 13:25, 37–39; Luke 22:3–4
- (f) Rev. 12:10
- (g) II Cor. 11:13–15; Mark 13:21–22
- (h) John 4:3; II John 7; I John 2:22
- (i) Rev. 13:13–14; II Thess. 2:8–11
- (j) Rev. 19:11, 16, 20; Rev. 12:7–9; Rev. 20:1–3
- (k) Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41

THE CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and (a) that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; (b) that man was created directly in God's own image and after his own likeness; (c) that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; (d) that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only "after their kind."

- (a) Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; Col. 1:16–17; Heb. 11:3; John 1–3;
Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:23–26; Jer. 10:12; Neh. 9:6
- (b) Gen. 1:26–27; I Cor. 11:7
- (c) Gen. 2:7; Gen. 2:21–23
- (d) Gen. 1:11; Gen. 1:24

THE FALL OF MAN

We believe (a) that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but (b) by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, (c) in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and (d) therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

- (a) Gen. 3:1–6, 24
- (b) Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:19
- (c) Rom. 3:10–19; Eph. 2:1, 3; Rom. 1:18; Ezek. 18:19–20

- (d) Rom. 1:32; Rom. 1:20; Rom. 1:28; Gal. 3:22

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe (a) that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; (b) born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and (c) that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

- (a) Gen. 3:15
(b) Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18–25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Ps. 2:7; Gal. 4:4
(c) I John 5:20; I Cor. 15:47

THE ATONEMENT OF SIN

We believe (a) that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (b) through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; (c) that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinners place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; (d) that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection. He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

- (a) Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24
(b) John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4–7; Rom. 3:25;
I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21
(c) John 10:18; Phil 2:8; Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Isa 53:11; Heb. 12:2
(d) I Cor. 15:20; Isa. 53:12; Heb. 9:12–15; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:2

GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

We believe (a) that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; (b) that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; (c) that it is instantaneous and not a process; (d) that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; (e) that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; (f) that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

- (a) John 3:3
(b) II Cor. 5:17
(c) Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6–7; Acts 2:41; Acts 16:30–33
(d) II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13
(e) John 3:8; John 1:12–13
(f) Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9

THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe (a) in God's electing grace; (b) that the blessings of salvation are made free to all through the gospel; (c) that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and (d) that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; (e) which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

- (a) I Thess. 1:4; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; Titus 1:1; Rom.8:29–30
(b) Matt. 11:28; Isa 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13; John 6:37
(c) Isa. 55:6; Acts 2:38
(d) Isa. 55:7; John 3:15–16; I Tim. 1:15; I Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:4–5; John 5:40
(e) John 3:18; John 3:36

JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

- (a) Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 5:9; Rom. 5:1
- (b) Titus 3:5–7; Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4; Gal. 3:11; Rom. 4:1–8; Heb. 10:38

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that Repentance and Faith are (a) solemn obligations, and (b) also inseparable graces, (c) wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; (d) thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; (e) at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

- (a) Acts 20:21
- (b) Mark 1:15
- (c) Acts 2:27–38
- (d) Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; Psa. 51:1–4; Psa. 51:7; Isa. 55:6–7
- (e) Luke 12:8; Rom. 9:11

THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of immersed believers (a) associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; (b) observing the ordinances of Christ: (c) governed by His laws; and (d) exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; (e) that its scripturally designated officers are Elders and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; (f) we believe the true mission of the church is found in the great commission: first, to make individual disciples; second, to baptize them; third, to teach and instruct, as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; (g) we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; (h) that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; (i) on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

- (a) Acts 2:41, Acts 2:42
- (b) I Cor. 11:2, Acts 2:42
- (c) Eph. 1:22–23
- (d) Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4, 8–11
- (e) Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5–6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17–28; I Tim. 3:1–7; I Tim. 3:8–13
- (f) Matt. 28:19–20
- (g) Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23–24; I Pet. 5:1–4
- (h) Acts 15:22; Jude 3–4; II Cor. 8:23–24; I Cor. 16:1; Mal. 3:10; Lev. 27:32; I Cor. 16:2
- (i) I Cor. 6:1–3; I Cor. 5:11–13

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian Baptism is (a) the believer's immersion in water; (b) into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; (c) to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; (d) that in scriptural order it (baptism) precedes the privileges of church membership and is the public recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ; (e) the Lord's Supper is a memorial service in which the elements of bread and wine remind us of the love of God in Christ Jesus, "Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," that

this ordinance is to be observed in anticipation of His coming and preceded always by solemn self-examination.

- (a) Acts 8:36–39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Rom. 6:4–5; Matt. 3:16
- (b) Matt. 28:19
- (c) Rom. 6:3–5; Col. 2:12
- (d) Acts 2:41–42; Matt. 28:19–20
- (e) I Cor. 11:23–28; Rom. 8:32

THE PERSEVERANCE AND PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS

We believe (a) that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; (b) that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; (c) that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and (d) that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

- (a) John 8:31–32; Col. 1:21, 23
- (b) I John 2:19; Matt. 13:19–20
- (c) Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30; Psa. 121:3; Heb. 1:14
- (d) I Pet. 1:5; Phil 1:6; John 10:28; John 10:29; John 16:8; Rom. 8:35–39

THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that (a) there is radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; (b) that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; (c) while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; (d) and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

- (a) Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17–18; Prov. 11:31; I Pet. 4:18
- (b) Rom. 1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34–35; I John 2:29; I John 3:7, Rom. 6:16
- (c) I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 6:16, Rom. 6:23
Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34, 41; John 8:21; Luke 9:26;
John 12:25; Matt. 7:13–14

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is (a) of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; (b) that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; (c) except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; (d) who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

- (a) Rom. 13:1–7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21–22
- (b) Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Pet. 2:13–14; I Pet. 2:17
- (c) Acts 5:29; Acts 4:19–20; Dan. 3:17–18
- (d) Matt. 10:28; Matt. 23:10; Rev. 10:6; Phil 2:10–11; Ps. 72:11

THE RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in:

- a. **THE BODILY RESURRECTION**
(a) Matt. 28:6–7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; I Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2, 4–6
- b. **THE ASCENSION**
(b) Acts 1:9; Acts 1:11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 12:2
- c. **THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD.**
(c) Heb. 8:6; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9–10
- d. **THE SECOND COMING**
(d) John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 25:13; Jas. 5:8; Matt. 24:42; Heb. 9:28

- e. THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD
 - (e) I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:42–44; I Cor. 15:52
- f. THE CHANGE OF THE LIVING IN CHRIST
 - (f) I Cor. 15:51–53; I Thess. 4:17; Phil. 3:20–21
- g. ON THE THRONE OF DAVID
 - (g) Luke 1:32; Isa. 9:6–7; Acts 2:29–30
- h. HIS REIGN ON EARTH.
 - (h) I Cor. 15:25; Isa. 32:1; Isa. 11:4–5; Psalms 72:8; Rev. 20:1–4; Rev. 20:6

ARTICLE 4: Position Statements

SANCTITY OF LIFE

We believe that all humankind bears the image of God, in that God created all humans as living, intelligent, determining, and moral beings (Gen. 1:26–27, 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10; Jam. 3:9); that God gave humankind dominion to care for the rest of His creation, reproduce, and fill the earth; and that because all humans bear the image of God, the value of all human life is sacred (Gen. 1:27–2:25). We believe that each human being (body and soul) is brought about by God’s set order and design of human procreation (Gen. 2:1–3; Heb. 7:10). Therefore, we believe a person is brought to full life at the point of conception and stand opposed to abortion and euthanasia (Ex. 20:13; Job 12:10; Psalms 139:13–16; Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15).

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND ETHICS

We believe humankind was created with the primary purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever, through demonstrating love for Him in worshipful obedience and showing His love for others by serving on the mission of Christ’s Gospel (Matt. 5:43–48; 22:37–40; 28:19–20; John 1:18; 20:21; Eph. 1:5–6, 12, 14). In light of our purpose, we believe the deliberate misuse or abuse of food, drugs, and alcohol (e.g. gluttony, intoxication, etc.) violates the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of a believer in Jesus Christ and is contrary to God’s will for His people (Prov. 20:1; 23:20–21, 29–35; 31:4–6; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 10:31; Gal. 5:16–26; Eph. 5:15–21). We recognize the personal liberty of conscience enjoyed by followers of Christ to develop personal standards under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:1–23; 1 Cor. 6:12). Yet we also teach that our love for the brethren reminds us to take care with our liberty regarding areas where no clear scriptural command is present (Rom. 15:1–2; 1 Cor. 8:1–9:27; 10:23–33).

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe God created the first man and the first woman together for marital union in a loving and respectful monogamous relationship; and that marriage between one man and one woman is an institution ordained by God (Gen. 2:18–25; Matt. 19:4–6; Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Pet. 3:1–7; cf. Rom. 1:18–32). Any other so-named “marriage” that distorts this pattern is unbiblical and contrary to the historic Christian faith. We believe a Christian marriage is to be a beautiful picture of the mystical union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22–33). Therefore, we also believe any form of sexual activity outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God’s gift (Lev. 18:1–30; Prov. 6:32; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 6:18; 7:1–11; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Thess. 4:3–8).

We believe, in accordance with God’s Holy Word, that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant love and commitment for life. Biblical marriage serves as God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. Furthermore, God’s design for marriage provides the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of holy sexual expression, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marital union. (Gen. 2:24–25; Matt. 19:4–6; 1 Cor. 7:2–5; Eph. 5:21–33; 1 Pet. 3:1–7; Heb. 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Lev. 18:1–30; Prov. 6:32; 1 Cor. 6:18; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Thess. 4:3–8). Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, cohabitation, or any attempt to change one's sex in disagreement with one's genetically defined sex¹, are against God's design, will, and character, and therefore sin. (Lev. 18:6–23, 20:13; Job 31:1; Prov. 6:24–26; Matt. 5:27–28, 15:19–20; Acts 15:20; Rom. 1:18–32, 13:11–14; Eph. 5:5; 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:9–11, 18; Gal. 5:16–24; Col. 3:5; Jude 1:7; Rev. 21:8).

In light of our firm biblical convictions, no Elder or any other person will perform same-sex weddings or any other anti-biblical “weddings” or ceremonies at any North Park Baptist Church facility or at any other location. Furthermore, no member or non-member parties will be allowed to use any facilities of the church for same-sex and/or sexually immoral weddings, wedding receptions, or other functions.

We do believe and affirm that God offers redemption, love, forgiveness, and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (John 3:16–21; Rom. 5:8; 7:21–8:17). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness

and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes, or speech directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of North Park Baptist Church (1 Pet. 2:11–25, 3:13–17; 1 Thess. 4:9–12).

We rejoice in the life-transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire to live and lead with the same healing truth and grace found in the apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians,

“...do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. 6:9b–11

Therefore, our desire is that North Park Baptist Church be a home of grace where hurting, broken, abused, and imperfect people can find salvation, healing, and hope in Jesus Christ.

¹We affirm that male and female sexuality is a binary biological reality present at birth. Understanding this is God's original design, we recognize that in rare cases people are born with ambiguous biological characteristics (XXY chromosomal issues, i.e. “hermaphrodites”).

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Divorce and remarriage are special matters of concern in the church because there is not a consensus in Biblical churches about the rightness and wrongness of divorce and remarriage. Often there is a real question of whether divorce and/or remarriage are valid moral options or sins to be confessed (from the past) and to be avoided (in the future). The great challenge to the church is to love biblically (1 John 5:2). The test of true love for people is not only the feeling of compassion in the heart, but also conformity to the commandments of God in behavior. We want to extend grace to all, but we do not want genuine care to be confused with compromise of biblical truth.

We believe that marriage is a sacred institution established by God and intended to be a lifetime covenant between a man and a woman and never to be broken. (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18–25; Matt. 19:3–8; Luke 16:14–18; I Cor. 7:11, 12, 39). Nevertheless, because of the deceit and power of sin and because of the remaining corruption in our own hearts, divorce still happens even in the lives of some Christians. For example, a mature Christian may be forsaken by a disobedient or unbelieving spouse or two professing believers may drift so far from the Lord that they no longer acknowledge in their hearts the authority of the Lord Jesus or the binding nature of their marriage covenant.

The following principles are guidelines for North Park as a spiritual family with a commitment to Christ and genuine love for each other, to be ready to minister forgiveness, healing, reproof, discipline, correction and restoration wherever appropriate to its members.

1. Marital status alone (single, married, widowed, divorced, remarried) does not indicate one's spiritual condition. Any sins related to divorce and/or remarriage are not unpardonable sins. The grace of God is always operative at the point of repentance and God is faithful and just to forgive—he will honor the worth of his Son's sacrifice for all who confess their sin and place their hope in the completed work of Christ (Is. 55:7; Mark 3:28; 1 John 1:9). This applies to sins committed before and after salvation.
2. The Bible gives two clear “exception clauses” that allow for divorce: adultery (Matt. 19:9) and abandonment by an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:15). We understand there may be some other situations that arise that require biblical wisdom (divorce before becoming a believer, abuse, etc.) Ultimately, the decisive issue concerning divorce and remarriage at North Park is our desire to follow a proper, biblical understanding of the issue. It is the responsibility of the Elders to humbly and prayerfully study the Scriptures and follow the guidelines given in the Scriptures on issues of divorce and remarriage. These issues are addressed in a document entitled “Divorce and Remarriage” from *The North Park Elders' Perspective Series* which is available by request.
3. Any believer who has questions or concerns related to marriage, divorce or remarriage should humbly seek the help and direction of church leaders because God has placed those men in the Body for such purposes (Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 13:7). The Elders desire to counsel members to understand their situations biblically, especially in cases where the appropriate application of biblical teaching does not seem clear. The church leadership may at times need to help individuals navigate how the biblical principles on marriage, divorce, and remarriage apply to their specific situation ([1 Pet. 5:1-4](#)).