

For those who want more detail on some of the terms of the Apostle's Creed, and what specifically Grace Church's Elders believe about them, our detailed doctrinal background statement is below.

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## DOCTRINAL BACKGROUNDS / DETAILS

**The Doctrine of God:** We believe there is but one living and true God, Who is one in essence, while eternally existing in three distinct personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Though each person of the Godhead possesses the same nature, each functions differently in respect to God's dealings with man (Deut. 6:4).

**God the Father:** The first person of the Trinity orders and directs all things according to His own purpose, pleasure and grace. He determined that the universe would be created apart from any pre-existing materials. He has decreed all things that come to pass for His own glory. He graciously involves Himself in the affairs of men, hears and answers prayer, and rescues from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:9; John 5:19-24; Eph. 1:3-6).

**God the Son:** Jesus Christ is both the eternal Son of God and virgin-born Son of man. Fully God and fully man, He surrendered nothing of His deity during His earthly life. Having led a sinless life, He satisfied the Father's justice concerning sin by His death. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His physical ascension, and His visible return to this earth to establish His earthly kingdom (John 1:14-18; I Cor. 15; Hebrews 2:17-18; Romans 3:24-26; Revelation 20:11-15; Colossians 2:9).

**God the Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity executes the will of God in the world of men. It is the Holy Spirit who applies the salvation Jesus Christ secured through His death on the cross. It's the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers the church to live a lifestyle pleasing to God, having endowed it with special gifts which equip believers to accomplish distinct ministries, planned beforehand by God the Father. (I Cor. 12; Eph. 2:10; John 3:1-8; John 16: 4-15; Eph. 1:13-14; John 15:16; Gal. 5:16-25)

**The Nature of Man:** We believe that man was directly created in the image of God to enjoy His fellowship and to fulfill God's will on this earth. Man fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the will of God; consequently all men are spiritually dead and subject to the certainty of both physical and spiritual death apart from Jesus Christ. The fall of man was a once-for-all historical fact.

It's spiritually deadening effect spread to all men, each of whom is born with a sinful nature and sins habitually in thought, word and deed (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 3:3-4; Rom. 1:18-32; Rom. 3:10-23; Eph. 2:1-3).

**Salvation:** We believe that Jesus Christ died for all sins, including ours, as the only sufficient sacrifice. The sole condition for receiving eternal life is faith (trust) in the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death on the cross for man's sin. All who believe in Him are declared justified by the Father on the grounds of Jesus' death and resurrection. All who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by grace through faith are regenerated by and baptized in the Holy Spirit. They are thereby the children of God forever and members in the one true church, the Body of Christ. This salvation will result in righteous living and good works as the believer submits his behavior to the Word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:21-26; I Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:7, 2:8-9; Heb. 10:10-12; John 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Titus 3:4-7; I John 5:11-13; John 3:16, 5:24)

**The Scriptures:** We believe that the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments are inspired of God, error-free in the original writings, and the supreme authority of faith and practice for the believer in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Heb. 4:12). We further believe that there is but one method of Bible interpretation: the literal method. The literal method recognizes the fact that the authors of Scripture meant what they said. Therefore, the literal method consistently applies the rules of grammar, literature, history, and culture to Scripture in order to unlock and understand the author's meaning.

**The Church:** We believe that all who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit belong to the one true church and are directed by the Scriptures to associate themselves in local, visible churches (Heb. 10:23-25). The local church is the only scriptural representation of Christ's invisible church and consists only of regenerated believers. The two-fold purpose of the church is to lead individuals to Christ and mature them in the faith (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:41-47; 4:1-16; I Cor. 12-14; Matt 16:13-28, 28:18-20; Eph. 2:19-22).

**The Future:** We believe that the next great event of human history will be the personal return of Jesus Christ. This is the BLESSED HOPE, which all those who love Jesus Christ yearn for. Though the time of Christ's return is a mystery, known only to the Father Himself (Matt. 24:36), we believe that it is as sure as Jesus' first coming was fact (I Thess. 4:15-17; John 14:1-3; Matt.24-25, Hebrews 9:27-28, Revelation 19:11-16, 2 Peter 3:8-14).

**Ordinances:** We believe that Jesus gave the church two ordinances to follow until His return, Baptism and The Lords Supper. The word "ordinance" emphasizes the fact that both were ordained or instituted by Christ (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20) as a symbolic act of faith and obedience.

Baptism is an essential “first step” for a believer who seeks to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple of Christ is one who is serious about learning about Christ and applying this truth to their life. In taking it, believers reveal that a coup has taken place in the secret recesses of their soul. The government of self has been toppled and overthrown. In its place, a new authority must reign and rule. It is Christ, the living Lord! We uphold the act of baptism as a sacred, uncompromisable injunction of the Scripture. Every believer, serious in his or her faith, will also be serious about baptism. It is the “badge” of our identity with Christ. In many ways, baptism is to Christianity what a ring is to marriage. A picture is indeed worth a thousand words. And the picture portrayed in baptism declares several truths:

1. It proclaims Christ’s death and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4).
2. It serves public notice to the world of one’s new life in Christ (Matthew 10:32).
3. It pictures a believer’s death to sin and his resurrection to a spiritual life and life style through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:3-7, 10-11).

- **ARE YOU INTERESTING IN GETTING BAPTIZED AT GRACE? IF SO, DOWNLOAD THE [Grace Church Baptism Booklet](#), READ THOUGHT IT, AND TAKE THE NEXT STEPS!**

Our method of baptism is the method of immersion. We feel strongly that this mode is the one presented in the New Testament for the following reasons:

1. The Greek word for baptism means: “to submerge, plunge, drench, saturate, dip.” (Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.131.)
2. Immersion followed the Jewish proselyte practice.
3. The practice of the early church was immersion. The command of Scripture is to be baptized. By it we both please the Lord and declare His reality in our lives and to the world.

The Lord’s Supper is the second of the two ordinances we practice at Grace Church. The meaning of the Lord’s Supper is primarily summed up in the command of Christ: “This do in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:24-25). It is first and foremost a memorial of Christ and His redemptive death and, secondly, an expression of our fellowship with one another. We believe the Lord’s Supper is open to all who meet the prerequisites outlined in the Scripture. They are: first, that one personally know Jesus Christ as Savior and, secondly, that they have a cleansed life. (Psalm 24:3-4; I Corinthians 11:17-34) We corporately share the Lord’s Supper in the Sunday morning worship service and encourage its celebration in our Grace Groups.