

GENERAL ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE I - The name of the Church will be "THE REFUGE"

ARTICLE II – Absolutes

“Absolutes” are the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The people of THE REFUGE believe and affirm these essential beliefs of the Christian faith.

There is One God and He Exists in Three Persons

We believe there is only one God, eternally self-existing as one essence and three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God, yet there is one God.

*Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; Matthew 28:18-20; John 4:24; John 15:26–27; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14

The Bible is God’s Word

The Bible is God’s written revelation of Himself, divinely given through human authors who wrote God’s inspired word as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. It is completely true, totally sufficient, without error, infallible, and is the final authority in the life of a Christian as it provides everything we need for life and godliness.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; Psalm 119:11,89,105,140; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 34:16; Isaiah 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; Jeremiah 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; Matthew 22:29; Luke 21:33; Luke 24:44-46; John 5:39; John 10:35; John 16:13-15; John 17:17; Acts 2:16; Acts 17:11; Romans 15:4; Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21

People are Created in the Image of God

Human Beings are created by God to reflect His image. They are the crowning work of creation and are worthy of love, dignity, and respect regardless of matters like age, race, gender, background, or economic status.

*Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:15-25; Genesis 5:2; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; James 3:9; Revelation 4:11

People Need a Savior

Because of the sinfulness of humanity, the image of God in people is distorted. All people choose to disobey God (referred to in the Bible as sin), deserve both physical and spiritual death, and need to be rescued. Only by the generous grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone can they experience salvation.

*Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:1-19; Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:36; Romans 3:9-23; Romans 5:10-12; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:8

Jesus is Both Savior and Lord

Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the Cross as a substitute for mankind, was buried, and raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will one day return in victory as King of kings and Lord of lords.

*Luke 1:35; John 1:14; John 10:15, 30; John 14:9; Romans 3:24-25; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus is the Only Way for Salvation

Salvation comes only by God's grace alone through Faith in Jesus Christ and is the only mediator between God and man. No religion, belief, or person can reconcile God and man or earn favor with God. Jesus alone, through His atoning work on the cross and bodily resurrection, can provide forgiveness and eternal salvation.

*Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; John 5:26-29; John 14:6; John 14:19; Acts 2:30-31 & 4:12; Romans 1:4; Romans 3:25; Romans 4:25; Romans 5:6-11; Romans 6:5-10; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1, 23

Salvation is by Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone

Salvation comes only through a faith relationship with Jesus Christ, the Savior, as a person repents of sin and receives Christ's forgiveness and eternal life. Salvation is immediate and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. This salvation is whole of God by His grace on the basis of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, not on the basis of human works.

*Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; John 1:12; John 3:3-7; John 5:24; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 11:18; Romans 2:4; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 2:14; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Peter 2:24

The Church is Christ's Body

The Holy Spirit immediately places all people who put their faith in Jesus Christ into one united spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the head. As the Body of Christ, the church is expected to live in unity with one another, exhort one another, and encourage one another toward love and good deeds.

*Psalm 133:1; Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 11:18-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 2:11-3:6; Ephesians 4:1-6; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 19:7-8

Jesus Christ will Return

God will bring the world to its appropriate end in His perfect timing. At that time, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth. Christ will judge both the saved and unsaved. Those who have trusted Christ will receive a glorified body and dwell forever with the

Lord. Those who have not trusted in Christ will spend eternity in hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

*Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:22-23; John 5:28-29; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; 2 Peter 3:7-13; Revelation 20:7-15; Revelation 21:1--22

ARTICLE III – Doctrine

These doctrinal positions reflect beliefs of THE REFUGE on important theological issues. We understand that there are areas of Doctrine where Christians may differ. However, this is what we teach at THE REFUGE and we believe there is freedom for Christians to believe alternative views and still be a part of the family of God.

Creation

We believe that God created the world from nothing and governs all things, at all times, in all places.

God created the whole world from nothing in a literal 6-day period and creation, according to the design of God, was good. God doesn't let the world exist; He makes the world exist. He upholds the universe by the word of His power, and He holds the world together in Himself.

*Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 24:1; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3

Baptism

We believe that the model we find throughout the New Testament is baptism after conversion by immersion into water. Baptism by immersion is meant to symbolically depict the believer's real union to Christ in His death and resurrection. It also symbolizes the fact that the "old, sin-enslaved man" is dead, and we are raised to walk in "newness of life" in Christ.

*Acts 2:38-42; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24

Communion

Communion is a sign to the church, who are remembering the sacrificial death of Christ for sinners, His sustaining work in our lives, and the future participation in the Wedding Feast to come in the New Creation.

Those partaking in the table participate in this ordinance through the breaking and eating of bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine. This bread and this cup point to our Lord's body and blood. Followers of Christ are commanded to take communion, presuming they have received Christ's offer of salvation by faith and examined themselves in repentance.

At THE REFUGE, we generally celebrate communion once a month in our regular worship gatherings.

*Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-30; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Revelation 19:6-10

Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God gives spiritual gifts to every believer, but that there were some “miraculous gifts” given in the early church that are no longer normative for today.

We believe that every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit. We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself or His gifts by ‘showy’ displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the faith.

*John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 5:18; Hebrews 2:3-4; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27; 1 John 5:14-15

Covid-19

We believe in the freedom to worship and will never close the church doors to worshippers. All are welcome here to worship. Free to wear a mask or not wear a mask. Free to vaccinate or not vaccinate. Free to social distance or not social distance. Free to watch online, it is your choice.

“In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity.”

- St. Augustine

*Galatians 5:13; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 10:25

Gender Roles

We believe God created two genders, male and female, and that both are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value, but are created as separate and distinct by God’s perfect design.

As part of God’s divinely created plan, men and women are to have different, yet complementary, roles and responsibilities in the home and church. As it relates to the church, men and women are both expected to lead, serve, and utilize their spiritual gifts for “building up the body”; however, the office of pastor/elder is reserved for biblically qualified men.

*Genesis 1:27–30; Genesis 5:2; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Titus 1:1-16, 1 Peter 4:1-19

Human Sexuality

We believe God has created humans as male or female and intends for sexual intimacy to be enjoyed exclusively between a husband and wife.

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman who are married to one another. We believe God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe all forms of sexual immorality (for example lust, adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, and use of pornography) are sinful and offensive to God.

We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through belief in Jesus Christ. We believe every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We renounce any hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual and consider them not in agreement with Scripture, nor the doctrines and spirit of THE REFUGE Community Church.

We also teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scriptures, including the call to repentance, does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of the church's loving mission to the world. We speak the truth in love.

*Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:23-24; Genesis 5:2; Leviticus 18:1-30; Leviticus 20:13; Matthew 5:16, 28; Matthew 15:18-20; Matthew 19:4-6; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 10:6-9; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 1:18-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:8-20; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; 2 Corinthians 5:11-20; Ephesians 5:31; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:4

Abortion

We believe the beginning of life and ending of life are God-given boundaries of human existence. We believe in the sanctity of unborn human life and that human life begins at conception in the womb. Isaiah 49:1

*Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 22:10; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 6:16-19; Galatians 1:15

Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan who is working in this world to destroy a person's soul and His doom is certain and through Christ.

*Revelation 12:1-10; Rev. 20:10

Eschatology

We believe that Jesus Christ is returning to the world in the future to judge the living and the dead.

The consummation of all things includes the physical, visible, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the glorification of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heaven and the new earth.

In the consummation of all things, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, are finally separated from the presence of God, enduring eternal punishment. The righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with God forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the purpose and expectation of creation will be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

The position we have always taken as a church is that individuals are free to hold different beliefs about eschatological matters. Our congregation is made up of thoughtful individuals who may hold to historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism. The good news is all these views are orthodox! Simply put, our hope is found in Who is coming, rather than the exact details of how and when He is coming.

*Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:22-23; John 5:28-29; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:27-28; 2 Peter 3:7-13; Revelation 20:7-15; Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-21

ARTICLE IV – Distinctives

In addition to our Absolutes and Doctrinal positions, we also hold to the “Distinctive” values explained below as things that are characteristic of THE REFUGE. These are not “right or wrong” issues within the church and we understand that other churches may hold differing opinions on these issues, but these are some of the things you can expect to find if you make the decision to become a part of THE REFUGE.

Word of God Saturated Preaching

Because of our high view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God, we value Bible-saturated preaching. We support all teaching with scripture.

Because we view the Bible as a unified story, of which Jesus is the Hero, we aim to constantly exalt Jesus in our preaching—regardless of our selected passage. We believe the best way to help people develop into mature disciples of Christ is by following this approach. It is our joy to explain what God has said in His Word, to declare what God has done in His Son, and to help people apply God’s Word to their hearts by the working of the Holy Spirit.

*Nehemiah 8:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Evangelism / Making Disciples

All Christians, through their salvation in Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, are called to participate in the mission of God through evangelism and disciple-making.

In evangelism, we work to verbally proclaim the message of the gospel to non-believers, seeking to convert them by the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to invite them to respond in repentance and faith.

In disciple-making, we strive to see every member of the church equipped to grow as a disciple of Jesus and to commit their lives to making more disciples of Jesus. We believe that making disciples is done by intentionally working for the spiritual maturity of others through evangelism, instruction, correction, modeling, and encouragement. These disciple-making efforts can and should take a variety of forms—ranging from formal and structured methods (classes, community groups, etc.) to less formal and organic practices (sharing meals, casual spiritual conversations, etc.)—all directed at helping others follow Christ.

In evangelism and disciple-making, our message is the gospel of salvation through Jesus, our primary tool is the Bible, and our sole power is the Holy Spirit.

*Matthew 9:37-38; Matthew 13:18-30; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10:42-48; Romans 10:13-15; Hebrews 10:23-25

Accountability

A church should be marked by biblical accountability and discipline. Members of the body of Christ should hold one another accountable for their obedience to the Word of God, and leaders of the church must watch over the flock that has been entrusted to them. When necessary, the church exercises church discipline according to the instructions given in Scripture, always with the desire of restoration for the erring brother or sister.

To see this level of biblical accountability at work in our church family, the foundation must be built on strong relationships, with instructional training alongside correctional church discipline. Loving one another in the church involves humbly sharing responsibility for one another's holiness in our lives.

*Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16

Giving

We do not pass a basket at THE REFUGE as we think giving is a spiritual issue between you and the Lord. We believe a church should be characterized by biblical giving. Members of the church give freely and joyfully of their resources to support the church and the mission of making disciples. We give generously as an expression of worship and in response to God's generous grace toward us. When we give, our hearts are changed, the church is edified, and God is glorified. We know that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also.

*Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Proverbs 11:24-25; Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 21:1-4; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:16-18

ARTICLE V – Objectives

THE REFUGE IS to preach and share the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In its approach to others, it shall be evangelistic, seeking to win lost souls.

THE REFUGE IS to be a teaching church, seeking to educate its members in the truths of God's Word.

THE REFUGE IS an inclusive Church of all persons, without regard to race, national origin, economic condition or geographical area, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, to participate in its ministries.

THE REFUGE IS a positive, loving, Church whose fellowship may be enjoyed around the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE REFUGE members shall be encouraged to have a beneficial influence upon the moral life of their homes and community.

THE REFUGE IS a church seeking to equip its people to do the work of the ministry.