

Our Beliefs

Our faith entails a list of beliefs—concerning a plethora of topics—far longer than those listed here. This list represents what we hold as essential Christian doctrines, as well as some distinctives that represent our official stand on pertinent topics of the day. Each point includes Scriptural references which support our belief, but are only a sampling—not an exhaustive list—of Bible passages for the topics.



BIBLE

The Bible as originally written, was inspired word-for-word and comprises our Holy Scripture, recorded by Spirit-led men. It is God's Word and is Truth, without error in the original writings. These writings have not changed in significant or consequential ways since first penned. The Bible is the complete written revelation of God's will for salvation of humankind, and the standard by which all humans should live. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of the Scriptures. Metaphors, allegories, parables and figures of speech are clearly identified within the context of such passages. Unless a passage is so identified, we take it as historical, literal fact; including references to creation, the supernatural, miracles and the humanly inexplicable.

Psalm 19:7; Prov. 30:5; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:7-14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21

GOD

There is one living and true God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect, all knowing, everywhere present; God of love; eternally existing in three persons (the Trinity): God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:26; Exodus 20:2-6; Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; Jer. 10:10; John 4:24; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 John 4:8

GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the Creator of all things through Jesus Christ. He is the absolute Ruler of the universe according to His purpose and grace. He is perfect in all His attributes. He is Father as the first Person of the Trinity and the Father of all mankind, but the true spiritual Father only of those whom He adopts through a relationship with Jesus Christ. All who come to Him through Jesus Christ are saved.

Gen. 1:1-3, 31; 2:2; Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Psalm 145:8-9; John 14:6; 17:3; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 11:6

HUMANKIND

Humankind was created in the image of God and given free will. We are specially created, not the result of an evolutionary process that claims we descended over millions of years from lower forms of life. God made us to have fellowship with Him. Mankind fell, through Adam's sin and is therefore spiritually dead, depraved and separated from God. People can do

nothing to save themselves and restore that fellowship. Each individual is responsible for his/her choice concerning Christ.

Gen. 2:7; 15-25; James 3:9; Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 14:1-3; 94:20; Jer. 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; 23; 5:10-12; 1 John 1:3, 6-7

GOD THE SON

God the Son, Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He became flesh as the only begotten Son of God and dwelt among us. Fully God and fully man, He gave His sinless life as a sacrifice for our sins by dying on the cross. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God the Father, to be our High Priest and Advocate. His death and resurrection is the only basis for salvation. He is coequal and coeternal with the Father. Whoever confesses with his/her mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in his/her heart that God raised Him from the dead, is born of the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God. Therefore, we have as our mission to Fully Know and Faithfully Proclaim Christ.

Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-4, 14; 3:35; 6:37-39; 14:1-6; Romans 10:9-10; Phil. 2:5-7; Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:20-23; 1 Peter 2:21-25; Acts 2:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:3; Titus 2:14; Acts 2:24,31,32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 15:4; 1 Cor. 15:1-8, 17-19; 1 John 2:2, 22-23; 4:2; 5:20

SALVATION

Salvation is a free gift by God's grace, received by placing faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that in salvation there is complete forgiveness of sin and the unmerited gift of eternal life in Heaven. Fellowship with God is restored through faith in Christ. All true believers who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ are assured of their salvation.

John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40; 14:6; 20:28-29; Acts 2:21; 26:18; Romans 5:9-10; 8:35-39; 10:9-13; 11:6, 23; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 1:8-9; Philippians 1:6; Titus 3:5; Jude 1; 1 John 5:1

THE CHURCH

Christ instituted the Church to equip and build up the believers' faith, and to empower and unleash people to the work of the ministry. The Church is the living body of Christ on earth. Christ is its Head and the source of its life. The Body is composed of those who have received him as Savior and Lord. The church is to gather together regularly to carry out its purpose. The church exists to: Celebrate God and all He has done with all that we are; Cultivate effective growth toward complete maturity in Christ; Care for the family of God; Communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost; Commit everything with which we have been entrusted to accomplish His work.

1 Co. 12:27; Eph 4:11-12; 5:23-24a; Col. 1:18; Matt. 16:15-18; Act 2:41-42; Eph. 2:19-22; Rev. 4:11; 5:12-14; Eph. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; John 13:34-35; 1 Thess. 5:11; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2:47; Heb 10:25

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

God the Holy Spirit's ministry is to indwell, guide, convict, regenerate, instruct, and empower the believer for Godly living and service. He is coequal and coexistent with God the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit convinces us to repent of our sins and confess Jesus Christ as Savior. He enables believers to obey Jesus Christ as Lord. He lives in believers and teaches them to live lives pleasing to God. He uniquely gifts and equips each believer to serve Christ and His Church. He helps each believer demonstrate "the fruit of the Spirit." He empowers believers to proclaim Christ to the world.

John 3:3-6; 16:7-13; 2Thess. 2:13; 1Cor. 12:3; John 14:26; 16:13; Romans 8:1-14; 1Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:17-21; 1Cor. 12:4-12; Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

BAPTISM

All true believers, in obedience to Christ, should give testimony of the atoning work of Christ through Baptism. Baptism (by immersion, when possible) is an outward expression of an inward change. It is a public testimony of our relationship with Christ, an act of obedience and the result of a willingness to follow Christ's example. Believers should also share in Communion—partaking together of the bread and the cup, representing His body and blood—which is the commemoration of His sacrifice for our sins. Being baptized and taking Communion are important biblical "works" given primarily to demonstrate commitment to and obedience of Christ. They have no saving or atoning power since we are saved and forgiven by grace through faith alone.

Matt. 3:13-15; 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41-42; 22:16; I Corinthians 11:17-27; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9

SATAN

Satan is a created being and the originator of sin. He is in rebellion against God. He is ceaseless and ruthless in his efforts to destroy God's plan of salvation for all humankind. He does not possess the attributes of God, but counterfeits the work of God by fostering false teachings that deny the blood of Jesus Christ and salvation by grace alone. The unregenerate unbeliever, deceived by Satan, will spend a conscious eternity in Hell; "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Gen. 3:1-15; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:11-12; Rev. 20:10

MARRIAGE

God created the institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The homosexual lifestyle is contrary to God's will and purpose for humanity. The Bible instructs that it is a sin. We also hold that the church is instructed to love all people, including those living such lifestyles, while abhorring their sin. Because of this, Living Oaks Church will not perform homosexual "marriages," nor will we condone or recognize such unions, even if the state passes laws that provide for recognition of them.

Gen. 2:21-25; Gen. 19; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22; Matt. 19:4-5; Mark 10:7; Acts 4:19; Rom. 1:26-27; 1Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:31; Heb. 13:4

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Biblical teaching strongly supports the Sanctity of Human Life. A biblical worldview does not allow for a woman's "right" to choose to take the life of her unborn child. Living Oaks Church supports the sanctity (sacredness) of all human life. We believe that life begins at the point of conception. Therefore, we abhor the practices of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Since life begins at conception, the pre-born child is a human being endowed by his or her Creator with divine dignity and inviolable rights. Thus, pre-born children should be accorded the same protection of life granted to every other human being. The Bible teaches that every human life is of great value to God. While we sympathize with those who have experienced the tragedy and heartbreak of rape and incest, abortion—even in those cases—amounts to the execution of an innocent child for the sin of the perpetrator. Abortion not only ends the life of an innocent human person, in the long run it only causes the mother greater pain and remorse. We support organizations that seek to reduce the taking of innocent life through abortion. We support the overturning and limiting of laws that allow a woman to legally choose to abort the child in her womb. We discourage the support of laws or political candidates that would uphold abortion as a viable choice. We seek to support, counsel and encourage any woman faced with an unplanned pregnancy to not opt for abortion. We also seek to provide resources, adoption options and spiritual support for the mother. We seek to offer the same for those (father or mother) suffering post-abortive guilt and to help them come to a place of forgiveness and cleansing. Regardless of choices made, all people should be treated with kindness and compassion.

Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13; Psalm 94:21; Prov. 6:16, 17; Jer. 1:4-5; Job 31:14-15; Luke 1:15; 41; 44

LAST THINGS

The Bible describes last things as an encouragement toward living holy lives and to give hope to all believers. We believe the last things will include (in part and not necessarily in this order) the rise of Antichrist and the false prophet; the rapture (snatching away) of the Church; a 7-year period of Tribulation; the battle of Armageddon; the defeat of Antichrist and detaining of Satan; the rewarding of believers; the punishment of unbelievers; Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth; the resurrection of all the dead; the final Judgment; Satan, Antichrist and the false prophet cast into the Lake of Fire to be "tormented day and night forever and ever"; Earth—as we know it—destroyed; a new Heaven and a new Earth; our eternal abode in Heaven.

Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezek 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31; 24:31-46; John 5:22-24; Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:10; John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Rev. 16; 19:11-16; 20:1-7, 11-15; 21; 22