

A Summary of Faith (of my church, and to which I subscribe)

- That Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, died for our sins and arose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; John 3:16)
- That God gave us his Word, the Bible, which is our final authority for Christian belief and practice (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105)
- That God created mankind, giving every person the ultimate level of worth as his creation, but that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)
- That God made forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life available to all, and gives these blessings only to those who trust Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord (John 3:16)
- That those who accept Christ should repent of sin, confess their faith, and be baptized into him (Romans 10:9, Acts 2:38)
- That the church is the body of Christ on earth, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and exists to save the lost and strengthen the saved (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- That Jesus Christ will one day return and reign forever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Supplemental (Romans 14 *passim*; 1 John 4:1-2; Matthew 7:12-23; all in context)

- That God encourages each individual in Christ to freely develop their own faith and its expression through prayerful individual and group communion with Him, fellowship, and Bible study, with openness to the Holy Spirit's leading, without fear of ostracism (Romans 14).
- That God calls Christians to protect freedom of conscience and defend individuals from uncritical, unspiritual pressure to conform which sometimes accompanies cherished, inherited interpretations or religious "know-it-alls" (Romans 14).
- That God wants people's faith to be their own—not that of their parents or revered church leaders (Romans 14, cf. verse 22).
- That some very devout, Bible-quoting religious people endanger their entrance into the kingdom of heaven; that we can tell who they are because they're "thorny"—people don't want to be around them because they're religion is abrasive. They, too, however difficult, can be redeemed (Matthew 7:12-23).
- That some very "un-devout", "non-religious" people *are* from God because they confess that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:1-2).

Therefore, we ask those who wish to exercise their faith as part of the fellowship:

- To love all others in and out of the fellowship and to support it by strengthening one another to fulfill individual and team roles among the Lord's people.
- To allow everyone the freedom to explore his faith without pressure from the "accepted" interpretations; to treat all with unconditional love; and to avoid spiritual arrogance (namely, the binding of, or judgment of others based on, *inferential interpretations*: any "doctrine" not *expressly* stated in God's Word).
- To develop *one's own* spirituality (rather than seeking to fix someone else's) by discovering, developing, and deploying one's own individual spiritual gifts.