

Theological Position Paper.

The following is offered as a guide to prospective ministry candidates.

We hold that **God** is uncreated and self-existent and exists in the perfect community of Holy Trinity, **Father, Son and Holy Spirit** and is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption and in final judgment. That the **Bible** is the inspired, inerrant (as originally given) Word of God and the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice. That in the beginning humankind rebelled against God and is guilty and now subject to God's wrath and condemnation. That the **Lord Jesus Christ** is God in the flesh, who came over to our side to do for us what we could not do for ourselves in living righteously, dying an atoning death on the cross, and rising bodily and victoriously for all who would come by faith to Him. That sinful human beings are redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death of their representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between them and God and are pardoned and accepted by **grace, through faith in Christ alone**. We believe in the regenerating work of the **Holy Spirit** who enables sinners to turn and trust in Christ and who gives the power to live the Christian life and to become more like Christ. We believe in the **one holy universal church** to which all true believers belong and that the expression of being part of the church universal is in commitment to the church local. We believe in the **personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ** to judge the living and the dead.

Baptism. We hold to a baptistic theology and are congregational in our polity recognising the leadership of our Elders, the ministry of our Deacons and the discernment of a prayerful membership. We believe that baptism in the New Testament is the response of the believer to the work of God in them. We do not take these things lightly but we do affirm that there is something that transcends the *practice* of baptism for Bible believing Christians, and that is the fellowship and unity of the saints. We will welcome into membership those who, after a time of guided study and of prayer, (a) display in their lives the evidence of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and who (b) maintain that to be baptised as a believer would be a violation of their conscience because of their view that their infant baptism is valid."

Communion. We encourage ongoing participation at the Lord's Table to be accompanied by membership. In Central the Lord's Table is open to all who profess faith in Christ and (if visiting) are in good standing with their own church.

Preaching/Leadership. We believe that when God's Word is truly preached, that God's voice is truly heard. Our pattern of teaching is therefore normally consecutive and expository. The distinctive teaching role within the church is given to qualified men (in the context of the gathered church) and is grounded in creation, fall and redemption and cannot be shaped by appeals to cultural developments. The New Testament shows us that women exercised important teaching roles, sometimes in partnership with the men and sometimes specifically to women, but not in such a way as to damage the God-given creational principle of 1 Timothy 2v 11-13, where the guidance to the church in Ephesus is clearly rooted, not in culture, but in pre-Fall creation.