We believe in God the Father

(Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24-28; Hebrews 11:3).

The Bible teaches that God is the Father of all creation, the Creator of our world. He is both one and three in the mystery known as the trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, Their glory equal, Their majesty coeternal.

We believe in Jesus

(John 1:14; 1 John 4:9; John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:18, Colossians 1:15-20).

We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, both fully human and fully God. That He is the expressed, perfect Image of the invisible God, and that He is the one and only living Son of God. Jesus is our savior, and through Him, God opened the way of abundant and eternal life through His death, burial, and resurrection to all who call on His name. We believe He is the sustainer and Lord of our lives, and we seek to follow His example and emulate the life he lived according to the Gospels in scripture.

We believe in the Holy Spirit

(John 16:5-15; Acts 1:7-8; Romans 8:26-27, Galatians 5:22-25).

The Holy Spirit is not the “force of God” but is God Himself, encouraging, guiding, and transforming us in the way of Christ. According to Acts 2:38, the Holy Spirit dwells in every believing Christian and was promised by Jesus as a gift resulting from our faith and obedience. We are, therefore, a Spirit-filled church seeking to do God's will and to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has inspired, preserved, and still illuminates Scripture. We believe that the Holy Spirit moves in supernatural and miraculous ways in the lives of believers as He did in the New Testament and provides all believers with unique gifts to edify the church. We believe that every believer is empowered by this same Holy Spirit every day.

We Need Salvation

(Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:23, John 3:16; Romans 10:9; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:36-41; Galatians 2:20)

We believe that every person is made in the image of God and has intrinsic, immutable value. However, everyone has sinned and rejected their Creator, therefore damaging that perfect image and no longer able to live in the presence of a Holy and Perfect God. This sin has put us in danger of being completely separated from God and all that is good for eternity in a place known as Hell. However, God provided salvation from Hell by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, taking on our death and separation. This salvation is not something that can be purchased or earned. We believe that salvation is a free gift by God's grace, bought for us at the cost of Jesus' death on the cross. Individuals choose to accept God's free gift of Salvation through believing in Jesus, confessing belief in Jesus as Savior, repenting of sin, and following Jesus' example. Having been justified through their professed faith in Jesus, we believe that believers enter into the ongoing process of sanctification; that is, personal transformation that includes an ever-growing love of God the Father through God the Son by God the Spirit, love of brothers and sisters in the church, and love for neighbor and enemy.

We trust the Bible

(Matthew 5:18; Matthew 24:35; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is the authoritative rule of faith and practice for Christians and the Church. As such, we emulate Jesus' teachings as outlined in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments as closely as possible, even when they seem to conflict with cultural norms and "common sense."

We Depend on Prayer

(Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6).

We are a praying church. We daily lift before God fervent prayers of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petition with the confidence that God will answer.

We believe Jesus is coming again

(Matthew 24:36-42; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10-11).

God, who created the heavens and the earth, will one day bring life on earth to a conclusion. While accepting various understandings of how God will bring this about, we ultimately believe that Christ will come again and will call His own to Himself, as He promised, and in doing so will create a New Heaven and New Earth to dwell with His people for eternity. We long for the day of Jesus' return and the establishment of His perfect kingdom, where there will be no sickness, death, sorrow, or pain.

The rule of unity:

(John 17)

We are called to unity and fellowship with all believers, trusting that we are all following Jesus to the best of our understanding. Yet we do not suggest that we must agree on all things pertaining to our walk in Christ. On many issues, we have the freedom to disagree. We do ask, however, that all who accept and hold a leadership or teaching position at Crossroads Christian Church of St. Matthews respect the following guidelines and resist any temptation to use their position as a forum from which to teach other views.

Specific Interpretations
While the Bible is authoritative, infallible, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Bible was also written by original authors to specific audiences at different time periods and in a foreign language. This means trying to obey the Bible still requires *interpreting* the Bible in specific ways on specific issues. **We believe two believers can disagree on these interpretations and still both be following Jesus faithfully.** Here's what *we* believe about these interpretive issues:

- **Baptism:** We believe that adult baptism by immersion is how someone biblically says, "yes" to Jesus. Salvation comes solely from faith in Christ, and that faith has the freedom to be expressed in many different ways (sinner's prayers, confirmation classes, etc.) according to a person's conscience. However, the *biblical model* for how we should respond to Jesus and express our faith is adult baptism by immersion, and as a church, we choose not to stray from that pattern whenever possible. While we want to celebrate newborns and the parents' desire to raise their child in the church, such ceremonies do not require water, and, for clarity, we refer to those celebrations as "dedications" instead of "baptisms". (Acts 8:36-38, Romans 6:3-4)
- **Salvation:** While salvation is a free gift done by the power of God alone that we cannot earn, we believe that God creates all people with the free will to accept or reject His gift of grace. We believe that God can allow free will in His people *and* still maintain His sovereignty over creation. (1 Timothy 2:3-4, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 3:20)
- **Communion:** We celebrate the Lord's Supper each Sunday, as the New Testament Christians did. In partaking of the bread and juice, we remember our Lord's sacrifice for us, and we strengthen our

relationship with Him. We invite all to join us in this meal, to understand its meaning, to experience the sacrament, and to believe as we do. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

- **Covenant:** Jesus instituted a new covenant with God that succeeded and transcended His former covenant with the people of Israel; hence, we accept the Old Testament as preparatory to the New Testament. Our relationship with God is founded on the freedom and grace of Jesus, not slavery and obedience to Old Testament law. (Acts 11:1-18, Hebrews 9:15).
- **Women in Leadership:** We believe that men and women can lead at every level of church leadership and that their qualifications should be determined purely on the characteristics in Scripture. While 1 Timothy 2 places restrictions on women in leadership for the church in Ephesus, we do not see that as a universal prescription for the selection of all church leaders, but rather, as a description of how each church is free to qualify leaders based on the unique needs of their city. Outside of that context, we see women in leadership modeled consistently throughout the New Testament, specifically in the persons of Mary, Junia, Lydia, Phoebe, and Priscilla. (Romans 16:1, 3, and 7, Acts 16, 18:26)
- **Marriage/Sexuality:** We believe we are made in God's image and that each person's biological gender is an intrinsic, immutable aspect of his or her nature and identity. We believe marriage should be a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman, and that sexual intimacy should only be practiced within the confines of the marriage relationship. (Acts 15:29, Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:24)
- **Spiritual Gifts:** We believe the Holy Spirit continues to perform miracles in the lives of believers based on their unique needs; however, these miraculous gifts are not universal nor required for a believer to trust that the Holy Spirit indwells in them. We also believe that the gifts of prophecy and tongues can only result in a message that agrees with and reiterates the existing revelation of Scripture; otherwise, it is not of God. For the sake of order and unity, we typically do not practice these gifts in our public worship services. (1 Corinthians 12 and 14:33)

Since we believe that it is possible for someone to *both* follow Jesus faithfully *and* not agree with our interpretation on these matters, we gladly love and fellowship with all who are following Jesus to the best of their understanding. However, for the sake of unity, we expect our leadership to teach these specific interpretations.