



First Presbyterian Church

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First Presbyterian Church in Graham, Texas is a church with a long history in this community and a diverse membership. We consider our members "family", and as a Christian family, we seek to reach individuals and the community at large in unique and loving ways. The Session of First Presbyterian Church in Graham, given the current issues receiving attention at General Assembly and the state of the world we live in, have dedicated time in prayer to discern where our church fits in, and how we as a part of the greater church should act in response. In an effort to communicate our commitment to our members and the community at large, and show our respect for one another and our differing theological views, adopt the following Statement of Faith for this community of Christ's body:

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GRAHAM, TX STATEMENT OF FAITH

We affirm that, "In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God sends the Church into the world to share the gospel of God's redemption of all things and people...The Church strives to be faithful to the good news it has received and accountable to the standards of the confessions. The Church seeks to present the claims of Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ alone as Savior and Lord, and new life as His disciples." (*Book of Order* F-1.0302d), and we confess that our sources of authority are, first of all, Jesus Christ, the Scriptures as the inspired work of God, our confessions, and then the *Book of Order*. We also affirm that the "chief end" of all God's people is "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." (Westminster Confession), and we confess that we often act in ways that diminish that glory and joy.

We also believe that The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) emphasizes the Authority of Scripture. In ordination, and subsequent installations, every deacon, ruling elder and teaching elder stands before the church proclaiming their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and their acceptance of Scripture as the authoritative witness to Jesus Christ and God's Word to them. One cannot embrace a view of the whole church that claims distance from the Lordship of Jesus and the authority of scripture while every person serving in ordered ministries of our church has steadfastly proclaimed their personal commitment to these very truths.

We know *The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* (its governing constitution) G-2.0104b states:

“Standards for ordained service reflect the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W.4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.”

We also affirm that our primary relationship with Jesus Christ is formed by the Scriptures as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and we confess that even when we diligently seek to be formed by Scriptures as revealed by the Holy Spirit, we may come to hold different convictions about issues.

This congregation seeks to uphold the spirit of the beginnings of our denomination. Since 1706 at the 2nd meeting of the original Presbytery of our denomination in Philadelphia, our church’s goal has been to do good throughout the world. This commitment in starting schools, building hospitals, reaching out to the poor, and promoting racial equality has never wavered. This is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s way of fulfilling the Great Commission.

As we grow as a church and in our own faith, we commit to finding creative ways to make space for one another in order to remain a diverse yet unified body of believers, and we humbly ask for guidance of the Holy Spirit as we learn to live together, love one another, and be reconciled to each other in the midst of these changes. We call upon all members of First Presbyterian Church of Graham and the PC(USA) to treat each other as Christians and not to label those who differ as somehow less committed to our Christian Faith.

The “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22 NRSV)