

## I. Identity Statement

### ***Our Identity***

God, by his grace and calling, has brought us together to be a family of believers who love the Lord God with all our hearts, minds, and souls, and our neighbors as ourselves. We are committed to demonstrating that love through worship and by the caring for and encouraging of one another. We are further committed, by our service, manner, and speech - by our lives - to demonstrate His love to all who have not yet heard the gospel.

### ***Our identity is being revealed by:***

- ❖ An adherence to those foundational truths in our Statement of Faith that unify us as a fellowship of believers and followers of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ A respect for the value of human life and the dignity of every man (male and female) as made in the image of God.
- ❖ A love for and commitment to family - individual families and the family of God.
- ❖ A commitment to service, for we are called to consider the needs of others more important than our own. We are dedicated to exemplifying God's love through practical service; the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual ministry to others.
- ❖ A devotion to prayer, for we are instructed to pray without ceasing. We understand that God answers prayer and that we are to pray in such a manner as to bring glory to our Heavenly Father.
- ❖ A commitment to continual spiritual growth of all of His people through training and practice of Biblical principles.
- ❖ A joy in sharing the gospel of God's saving grace by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by our very lives – moment to moment.

## II. Statement of Faith

**WE BELIEVE** there is one God, creator and sustainer of the universe, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**WE BELIEVE** God the Father is an infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice, mercy and love, and that He concerns Himself intimately in the affairs of mankind.

**WE BELIEVE** Jesus, the Son, is truly God and truly man. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died on the cross. He shed His blood as the only substitutionary atonement for our sins. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into Heaven where He now intercedes for all who believe in Him. He will come again personally, triumphantly and imminently to rule forever and to reward His own.

**WE BELIEVE** in the ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life, and by whom the Church, the Body of Christ, is gifted and equipped to serve and glorify God.

**WE BELIEVE** man is created in God's image, but all have sinned and face eternal judgment. Unless a person is born again, he/she cannot see the Kingdom of God.

**WE BELIEVE** salvation is a gift of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

**WE BELIEVE** the Church is made up of all believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

**WE BELIEVE** in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, that the Bible, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, are the inspired, infallible Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life.

### III. Governance

***We at OGBF are committed to a form of governance characterized by:***

- An organizational structure that promotes sensitivity to God's leading
- A recognition that although responsibilities differ, all acts of service are equally valuable before the Lord and to the fellowship
- Elders, though distinct by the nature of their responsibility, maintain equality with rest of fellowship
- Elders who share all leadership responsibilities with each other on a voluntary basis
- Ministry leaders who serve under the guidance of the elders
- Fellowship participation in the life and work of the church

#### ***Elder Responsibilities***

##### General

- Embrace and lead in accordance with OGBF Philosophy of Ministry
- Develop and maintain open lines of communication within fellowship
- Encourage and enable fellowship to serve as God leads
- Maintain accountability to fellowship of OGBF
- Make decisions on the basis of elder unanimity

##### Specific

*1. Shepherding – Cultivate and nourish relationships with entire fellowship as evidenced by:*

- Fostering compassionate “tending” of fellowship needs
- Maintaining a sensitivity to the hearts of the fellowship
- Leading and protecting fellowship
- Facilitating biblical responses to challenges of life

*2. Ministries/Worship - Provide atmosphere where worship thrives in each and every sphere of ministry as evidenced by:*

- Valuing no form of ministry as inherently more valuable to God than another
- Supporting existing and facilitating new ministry opportunities in accordance with OGBF Philosophy of Ministry
- Overseeing planning of all services, meetings and special events so as to glorify God

*3. Equipping - Promote atmosphere where minds and hearts are challenged to grow and where both doctrinal and devotional teaching are valued as evidenced by:*

- Providing sound biblical teaching consistent with OGBF Statement of Faith and which does not promote divisiveness
- Providing biblical teaching aimed at spiritual growth and preparation for responding to life issues in a Christ-like manner
- Promoting spiritual growth and development of leadership

*4. Administration – Practice all business in a manner above reproach as evidenced by:*

- Maintaining integrity of OGBF Philosophy of Ministry (i.e. any alterations to the Philosophy of Ministry are to be made by following the task force process laid out in Appendix A)
- Implementing provisions of OGBF Philosophy of Ministry through policies and procedures as needed for efficient, effective and biblical operation in direct accordance with those provisions (including deacons, administrative support staff, etc.)
- Overseeing fiscal and physical resources of fellowship
- Overseeing necessary business operations of OGBF as 501(c)(3) corporation (including operating under constitution and by-laws as required by state)
- Overseeing elder selection and evaluation process (as laid out in Appendix B) according to eligibility found in Appendix C

## IV. Ministries

We at OGBF affirm each one of us should use whatever gifts we have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms; therefore, we intentionally involve ourselves in ministries that live out the following values from our identity statement in tangible ways.

- *An adherence to those foundational truths in our Statement of Faith that unify us as a fellowship of believers and followers of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*
  - Associated ministries are worship services and the ordinances of Scripture - baptism and communion
- *A respect for the value of human life and the dignity of every man (male and female) as made in the image of God*
  - Recognizing every human life, from conception to departure, deserves to be treated with dignity, associated ministries may include crisis pregnancy centers, rescue missions, recovery centers, and ministry to the elderly and disabled
- *A love for and commitment to family - individual families and the family of God*
  - Associated ministries may include weekly meeting as a congregation, weekly fellowship and snack time following service, infants and toddlers ministry, Family Sundays, potlucks, marriage mentors, family and individual discipleship training, college/career/singles ministry, OGBF sports teams, and involvement with the local Christian community
- *A commitment to service, for we are called to consider the needs of others more important than our own. We are dedicated to exemplifying God's love through practical service; the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual ministry to others*
  - Associated ministries may include benevolence activities such as visitations, meals, cards and letters, house repairs, memorial services, financial help, and widows and orphans ministries; music ministry such as weekly service music teams, choir, and hand bells; and other ministries such as audio/visual support, ushers and greeters, business administration, stewardship, bulletins, art ministry, directory, and decorations
- *A devotion to prayer, for we are instructed to pray without ceasing. We understand that God answers prayer and that we are to pray in such a manner as to bring glory to our Heavenly Father.*
  - Associated ministries may include regular congregational and small group praise and prayer time and our prayer chain
- *A commitment to continual spiritual growth of all of His people through training and practice of Biblical principles*
  - Associated ministries include weekly congregational teaching and may include Bible studies such as home Bible studies and men's and women's Bible studies, men's breakfast, women's tea, senior saints, children's church, youth group, Sunday school, family camp, VBS, AWANA, and continuous discipleship
- *A joy in sharing the gospel of God's saving grace by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by our very lives - moment to moment*
  - Associated ministries may include local, national, and international missions, as well as community outreach activities

The above ministries include many present and anticipated ministries of OGBF. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it intended to limit members from participating in ministries they feel the Lord is calling them to as we pursue making disciples of all nations.

## V. Worship Service

We believe that our spiritual act of worship is to serve God and others by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God in every area of our lives. We believe the scriptures are clear that we should joyfully and actively assemble together to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

The purpose of this section on worship is to characterize our corporate gathering, our “worship service”. We desire this worship service to be glorifying to God in its entirety. Our focus shall be on God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, expressed with love and a spirit of humility. The elements of our service shall complement, and not distract, from our worship.

Our desire is that all come to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and that God will use our service to that end. We recognize that the primary purpose of our worship service is to encourage and equip the saints for every good work.

### ***In our worship services we value:***

- Our prayer and praise time. This provides an opportunity for our family to praise God and openly share with one another what God is doing in our lives. This close fellowship allows us to pray for one another, weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice.
- Teaching/preaching from God's word, with several men sharing this responsibility from week to week
- Setting time aside for outreach teams and full time missionaries to share their experiences or ministries
- A variety of music teams and music styles from groups and individuals
- A weekly offering available for God's people to give from their hearts. To remove the distraction of offering plates being passed, gifts are placed in a handmade wooden church in the foyer
- A special time for reading God's Word
- Fellowshiping before and after our worship service. This is a joy for us, and we encourage “hanging around” after the service. Refreshments are provided for all to connect in friendship and love
- A time for announcements to keep us informed and to reveal ministry opportunities that keep us connected as a family

### ***We also value:***

- Setting aside the first Sunday of every month to partake of the Lord's Supper
- A consistent order of service, while maintaining a spirit of flexibility
- Providing ministry/service opportunities for individuals in our fellowship desiring to be used or strengthened in their giftedness
- Special Sundays where the service is designed for entire families to worship together
- Special and seasonal services/programs

## **Appendix A**

### Task force process

- Establish task force comprised of elders and fellowship representatives in a manner that provides for participation of entire fellowship (task force to be comprised of equal number of elders and fellowship representatives)
  - Heads of households invited to assist in selection of task force members
  - Nominations for representatives submitted by heads of households
  - Heads of household and elders vote for nominees
  - Fellowship representatives are those receiving most ballots
- Follow process originally used to develop Philosophy of Ministry
  - Fellowship encouraged to submit questions or comments to task force at any time
  - Task force develops draft statement and presents to fellowship
  - Fellowship reviews draft and everyone encouraged to provide feedback to task force
  - Task force reviews feedback, makes changes as appropriate, and responds personally to each individual giving feedback
  - Task force presents final statement to fellowship

## **Appendix B**

### General guidelines for elder board composition

- A minimum of one elder for every 40 regular attendees is seen as a reasonable goal
- A reasonable rotation of new and continuing elders is deemed as generally healthy for the fellowship, although elders may serve as long as they desire and are deemed eligible and effective by annual fellowship evaluation
- Elders seek to maintain elder board composition that, while it demonstrates harmony and mutual respect, also values diversity of opinion, occupation, education, stage of life, etc.

### Selection of new elders

- To take place annually at a date determined to be most appropriate, so that commissioning of new and current elders takes place no later than mid-September of each year
  - Fellowship is responsible to provide nominations for consideration by elders according to eligibility requirements found in Appendix C
  - Elders review and evaluate nominations for consideration
  - Elders consult nominees for agreement to serve and present final list to fellowship in order to solicit any reasons anyone from list should not serve as elder
- Elders make decision and announce to fellowship

### Evaluation of current elders (runs concurrent with selection process)

#### General

- Elders are to maintain a continuing mutual accountability for each other's spiritual walk
- Fellowship is responsible to provide feedback concerning elder board performance of elder responsibilities in this document

#### Specific

- Fellowship submits annual evaluation of current elders according to eligibility requirements found in Appendix C
- Elders carefully and diligently consider any concerns
- Elders make decision regarding concerns and respond to one voicing concerns

### Commissioning of elders

- Elders and fellowship affirm and commission new and continuing elders

**Appendix C**

Elder Eligibility

- Must demonstrate biblical qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-3
- Must demonstrate a shepherd's heart (e.g. humble, compassionate, teachable, servant spirit, etc.)
- Must demonstrate spiritual maturity through life experiences
- Must embrace established Philosophy of Ministry
- Must be known and recognized by fellowship and elders as having the qualities noted above