



Gillingham Community Church

Our beliefs

1. God

There is one true God who is infinite, eternal, almighty, all-present and perfect in holiness, goodness, truth and love. In the mystery and unity of the one God there are three co-existent persons who are equal in essence but distinct in personality and function: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. The Father

God the Father is the creator and sustainer of everything, including heaven and the earth. His purposes cannot be frustrated. He made all things for his joy and his glory and he intends that we should live as his children. He is faithful to every promise that he has made and in his unfathomable mercy, he gave his Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our sin.

3. Jesus

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Anointed One. Jesus became human, though he remained fully God. He was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit and born naturally from a woman called Mary. He lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins by dying, nailed to a cross. He rose from the dead after three days, demonstrating his power over sin and death. He went back to heaven and will return to earth again in power and glory to judge the world.

4. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit lives in every Christian from the moment that they are born-again as a source of assurance, strength for living, understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are relevant for today and God gives his gifts to enable and empower us for the purpose of strengthening the church.

5. Human beings

God loves everyone without condition and values them all equally. Each person is a unique creation with the potential to have a loving relationship with God and with each other. People were originally created in the image and likeness of God to honour him and to enjoy a relationship with him, but they rebelled and alienated themselves from God (sin). Sin separates us from God. We are all marred by sin and incapable of living out the full humanity for which we were created. Sinful people, whatever their character or achievements, are lost and without hope apart from being born-again.

6. Good News

Anyone, who turns away from their sin and, by faith, receives Jesus as their Saviour and Lord of their lives is born-again and becomes an adopted child of God. This is achieved entirely due to God's unconditional love for us. It is not deserved and cannot be earned by anyone. It is made possible only by the willing sacrifice of Jesus on behalf of us all. This is the Good News or Gospel. A genuine relationship with God is accompanied by evidence of increasing devotion and obedience to the ways of God as those who are born-again submit to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

At physical death, or when Jesus returns to the earth, those who are born-again will enter immediately and consciously into God's perfect presence for eternity.

7. Reaching out

Evangelism is telling those who are not born-again the Good News. Jesus is the builder of the church and the Holy Spirit convicts those who hear the Good News to change their ways. The role of the church is to actively seek relevant ways to inform people about Jesus' sacrifice for them and what it means to be born-again. Everyone who is born-again is called to be a witness to the Good News and to be an ambassador of Jesus in the way that we live our lives.

8. Doing good

Whilst being born-again is entirely by faith in Jesus and his sacrifice on our behalf, the ongoing changes in our attitudes and behaviour are evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, leading us to do good works and to serve others. We act in this way as a result of being born-again, not to obtain it.

9. The Bible

The Bible is complete and inspired by God. It is God's written revelation about himself and the Good News about being born-again. It is the only basis and source of truth for Christian beliefs, our way of living and the practices of the church.

10. The Lord's Supper

We celebrate the Lord's Supper (breaking of bread or communion) regularly, remembering the sacrifice made by Jesus in an attitude of faith and self-examination. It commemorates and symbolises the once and for all breaking of Jesus' body and the shedding of his blood as payment for our sin. Participation in the Lord's Supper is open to anyone who is born-again and has a good conscience.

11. Baptism

Baptism of those who are born-again by complete immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus. It is a visual and symbolic demonstration of our connection to Jesus' death, burial and rising from the dead. It signifies that our former way of life has been put to death and that we are now a born-again child of God.

12. Prayer

The primary purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God himself and that the life of God may be nourished in us as individuals and together. Prayer is vital to us in receiving God's direction and purpose. Prayer brings about change in our circumstances, attitudes, actions and perspective in our journey through life with God.

13. Worship

Bringing glory to God is the main purpose in life for those who are born-again. In worship we focus on God and not ourselves. Worship is free from set times, particular places or repetitive actions. It is at the heart of our relationship with God, both as individuals and as a community. Our whole lives and everything we do is an act of worship bringing glory to God.

14. Church

There is one universal church consisting of all born-again Christians.

The local church exists to fulfil the purposes of God in reaching out to those who are not yet born-again, extending his rule on the earth and encouraging and supporting those who have been born-again in their walk with God. People are inter-dependent on one another according to God's design.

The local church is an assembly of those who are born-again in a particular location. The leading of the Holy Spirit, the context and culture in which the local church is

situated and the gifts, talents and abilities of the individuals working together all influence how the local church is organised to fulfil its purposes and to be relevant to the wider community.

Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, we seek to form relationships with other churches locally, where our particular vision and purpose is the same or similar. We also look for relationships with other churches and organisations in other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas on the same basis.

15. Leadership and governance

Jesus is the only head of the church and all authority is his.

God has created us to interrelate together as a family in community. Within this community each of us is accountable for our own attitudes, actions and relationship with God and with each other. The sacrifice of Jesus has provided a way for us to have a relationship with God without any human intermediary between us and God.

Local church leaders are accountable to him for the spiritual direction and care of the Christians who are joined together in the local church. Leaders operate as a team of equals for the protection of each other and of the rest of the church. Those who lead and those who fulfil other roles in the church follow the example of Jesus in being servants to those in their care. Other roles that serve the church and build it up, but which may relate to a number of local churches, such as evangelists, prophets, healing ministries and apostles, are to be part of and accountable to a local church.

We respect and work alongside Christians who prefer other forms of church organisation and governance and whose beliefs may vary from ours in some respects. However, we do not believe that having a separate clergy class, hierarchical structures, denominational groupings or adding to biblical truth with tradition or religious rites are ultimately helpful in the outworking of our faith.