

EDWARDS CHAPEL

Mission, Vision, & Core Beliefs

ARTICLES OF PURPOSE

ARTICLE II: MISSION

The mission of Edwards Chapel is to know Jesus intimately and to make Jesus known to others.

We are a non-denominational Church community that stands on Biblical principles. We believe everyone needs the hope Jesus offers, so our passion is to help people find that hope and grow in a relationship with Him. We emphasize grace and acceptance, yet we're equally passionate about truth, as well as helping people understand who Jesus is and how to take the next right step in their journey of faith.

ARTICLE II: VISION

(Proverbs 29:18): *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."*

Edwards Chapel exists to be a people through whom Heaven invades earth, discipling men, women, and families to live under the loving rule and reign of Jesus and serving the flourishing of our town and region.

ARTICLE III: CORE BELIEFS

THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is God's written word. We believe that all scripture (the 66 books of the Old and New Testament) are the infallible and complete Word and Revelation of God, useful in teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. They also inspire faith, hope and love in those who believe and obey them.

Scripture References: II Timothy 3:15-17

THE TRINITY & GODHEAD

We believe that the Trinity is one God existing in three divine persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons are coequal, coeternal and they share the same essence or nature (consubstantial) and are equal in every divine perfection.

Scripture References: Matthew 28:19, II Corinthians 13:14

God the Father

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. We believe He is the creator and sustainer of all things, and designed and organized the plan of redemption for mankind. We believe that God is all powerful (omnipotent), all knowing (omniscient) and always present (omnipresent).

Scripture References: Genesis 1:1, Matthew 19:26, Psalms 147:5, Ephesians 1:3, 4:6

Jesus Christ

We believe that God the Father sent Jesus Christ as His plan for man's redemption and salvation. Belief in and acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only way sinful humans can be reconciled to God and thereby offered salvation and the promise of eternal life.

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, and His death on the Cross for man's sins. We believe in His physical resurrection from the grave, His ascension to heaven where He makes intercession with the Father for believers, and His promised return for all believers where He has prepared a place for us in Heaven.

Scripture References: Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:27-35, Luke 24:6, John 1:1-3,14, Acts 1:9-11, Romans 8:34, I Corinthians 15:3-4, II Corinthians 5:21, I John 2:2, Revelation 19:11-16, Revelation 20:4-6

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Father sent the Holy Spirit in the name of the Son. Believing in the Trinity is vital to understanding the powerful role the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of believers and the way God is active in the world. We believe the Spirit dwells inside every faithful believer and becomes his counselor and helper guiding them in the way of the Truth.

Scripture References: John 14:16-17, 26, John 16:13-14, Acts 9:31

SATAN

We believe that Satan is a real, created being who, because of rebellion against God, was cast out of heaven and who is actively engaged in leading man into rebellion against God today. He opposes God and all of God's people. He is behind every evil scheme on this planet—idolatry, cults, false religions, as well as domestic and social issues plaguing society today. Still desperate to be worshipped, he wants to destroy God's Kingdom, and we need to take his schemes seriously and be diligent and steadfast in the faith. Satan is our enemy. Satan's destiny is to be judged and cast into the lake of fire, there to be tormented forever and ever.

Scripture References: Revelation 20:10, Isaiah 14:12-16, John 8:44, John 10:10, I Peter 5:8

MAN & HIS PURPOSE

We believe God made man in His own image by a distinct creative act. We believe the Scriptural record of the fall of man through disobedience to God. Because of man's fall, sin was introduced into the world and the result was man's physical life having strife and eventual death.

Purpose of Man: The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God created man for His glory. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of man is simply to glorify God. Part of what it looks like to glorify God is to acknowledge who God is, our Creator; and to praise and worship Him as such. We fulfill our purpose of glorifying God also by living our lives in relationship and faithful service to Him.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 3, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3, I Samuel 12:24, I Thessalonians 5:16-18, I Corinthians 6:20, 10:31, I Peter 4:11

SALVATION & GRACE

Salvation: Salvation is entirely a gift of God's grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is in no way based on a person's earning it through goodness, merit, or deeds. Salvation includes conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, repentance, forgiveness of sin, a new birth (regeneration), justification, and sealing with the Holy Spirit. All these bring one into a new life in Christ Jesus.

Grace: We believe Grace is one of the most important concepts in the Bible, Christianity, and the world. It is most clearly expressed in the promises of God, revealed in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ. Grace is a free gift of God, not of works. Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely, God's kindness on the undeserving, the peace of God given to the restless, the unmerited favor of God.

Scripture References: Ephesians 1:13, 2:8-9, John 3:3, 16:8-9, Luke 24:47, Psalm 37:39, Romans 5:17, 6:23, II Corinthians 12:9

SANCTIFICATION

We believe that to be sanctified is to be made holy and set apart for God's purposes. To be sanctified or saved you must be cleansed of your impurities, receive forgiveness from your sins, and make a commitment to God. We believe sanctification takes place in three stages:

- **Instantaneously:** As soon as we accept Christ as our Savior, we are sanctified. When we trust in Christ by faith we are set apart in Christ and considered to be saints based on the work of Christ in us. God bought us; therefore, He owns us and has declared us sanctified. (*I Corinthians 6:11*)
- **Progressively:** To become more Christ-like is a progressive process for believers in living a life by faith in Jesus Christ. We grow in Christlikeness by cooperating with the Holy Spirit in seeking to live more faithfully in accordance with God's word. He is remolding us into the image of Christ. (*II Corinthians 7:1, Romans 8:29*)
- **Completely:** We are in Christ by faith, and He is in us by the power of the Spirit. This glorified state will be our ultimate separation from sin, a total sanctification in every regard. We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (*I John 3:2, II Corinthians 5:17*)

JUSTIFICATION

We believe justification is a divine act whereby God judicially declares a believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable before Him because Christ has borne the sinner's sin on the cross and in turn has given the believing sinner His own righteousness.

- Justification comes apart from the law; it cannot be earned.
- Justification is made possible by the sacrificial death of Christ.
- Justification is the free and gracious gift of God bestowed on those who receive by faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Justification demonstrates the righteousness of God.

Scripture References: Philippians 3:9, Romans 4:3, Romans 5:17

THE CHURCH & PRACTICES

We believe that our Church is not a building or a denomination but a body of believers who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, banded together voluntarily for worship, service, fellowship, encouragement, and to carry out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.

Scripture References: Matthew 28:19-20

Body of Christ

The church is called the body of Christ because Christ is the head of the church and we are called to do the work of Christ. We have different skills, purposes, and spiritual gifts, yet every believer is equally important to the full functioning, mission, and desired result of the church. This diversity is celebrated and recognized as God's great design.

Scripture References: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Romans 12:4-5

Believer's Baptism & Dedication

Believer's Baptism: Baptism publicly acknowledges one's confession of faith in Christ and the Gospel. It does not save a person; instead, it symbolizes salvation that has already occurred, marking the beginning of a new life.

Baby Dedication or Baptism: Two options for believing parents to make a commitment before the Lord to raise their child according to God's Word and Ways, supported by the church community. This choice is made after prayerful consideration with the pastor.

Scripture References: Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 16:31-33, Proverbs 22:6, Luke 18:15-17, I Peter 3:21

Communion

The Lord's Supper is a privilege for born-again believers to outwardly show their love for and fellowship with Jesus Christ. It represents Christ's death until He returns and is to be taken thoughtfully and reverently.

Scripture References: I Corinthians 11:23-29

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Marriage: We believe marriage is between one biological man and one biological woman, forming a sacred covenant before God and man. A Christian marriage has Christ at the center, with the goal of growing together in Christlikeness.

Divorce: God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) because it deeply wounds His beloved and breaks a sacred covenant. However, we recognize that while divorce is always caused by sin, divorce itself is not always sinful. It is the Church's responsibility to reach out with love and care to those hurting because of divorce, as well as single-parent families and stepfamilies.

Scripture References: Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Romans 3:23-24, 12:15, I Corinthians 12:25-26, II Corinthians 1:3-4

ETERNITY

One of the bonuses of being a Christian is the wonderful hope that extends beyond the grave into the glory of God's tomorrow. We are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land; our citizenship is in Heaven. To those who are faithful, Christ will give a crown of life.

- **Everlasting Joy:** We believe in the everlasting joy of the saved, who will receive rewards commensurate with their service to the Lord.
- **Everlasting Judgment:** We believe in the everlasting punishment of those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, who will receive punishment commensurate with their deeds.

Scripture References: John 14:1-2, Luke 12:47-48, I Corinthians 3:12-15, II Timothy 4:8, Revelation 20:15