



21649 Timberlake Road  
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## Timberlake Church Statement of Faith

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

-Proverbs 3:5-6

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

-Ephesians 3:16-19

What follows is the Statement of Faith of Timberlake Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. Founded as a Methodist Church in 1953, Timberlake disaffiliated from the United Methodist denomination in 2023. In the absence of such affiliation, Timberlake now establishes and clarifies our foundational doctrines from which our faith and ministry grow.

Since 1953, Timberlake Church has confessed the Biblical, orthodox faith of the Church of Jesus Christ, evangelical in nature and Wesleyan in tradition. With great joy we affirm that Almighty God has called us to serve our neighbors in Jesus' name for the sake of changing their lives and ensuring their eternal life. This document contains "the faith that God has entrusted once and for all to his holy people" (Jude 1:3) and therefore is set permanently as the standard for faith, belief, and practice for the people called Timberlake. It shall not be altered, amended, or set aside except by consensus of the Timberlake Church Council.

The purpose of this Statement of Faith is to

- Confess the faith of the people called Timberlake in the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- Affirm that this congregation, established in 1953, continues to believe these things,
- Advise those who are new to our congregation what we believe and why, and
- Instruct our people in the way of Jesus Christ.



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*Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, give us faith to trust you, and by the power of your Holy Spirit keep us in your eternal life. Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.*

### **Part 1: Timberlake history**

On Sunday evening, July 31, 1953, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. T.M. Hughes, some Timberlake area residents met to organize what would become Timberlake Methodist Church. Earl Martin, a young Lynchburg College graduate and seminarian at Garrett School of Theology, became the first pastor. On August 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am 31 people gathered for worship at Timberlake Tavern, and heard the first sermon, "The Good News." On October 4<sup>th</sup> 58 people joined the church. Two years later, on Easter Sunday in 1955, the first worship service was held in the new sanctuary in the church building on Timberlake Road.

Over time the church grew in faith, people, and impact. A scouting ministry was formed. Timberlake grew in her passion for feeding the hungry and ministering to children. In 1978 the church established the Early Learning Center and in the following years expanded the building multiple times to include classrooms, the Family Life center, the children's wing, and a new sanctuary. When Lawyers Missionary Baptist Church was destroyed by a tornado, Timberlake helped them rebuild. The church increased in worship attendance and financial giving, as well as ministries and staff. Timberlake sent mission teams to Sri Lanka, Russia, Jamaica, and Mozambique. After school care, summer camp, and infant/toddler care are added to form a comprehensive Child Development Center. The church established the Fillin' Station food pantry to feed our hungry neighbors. Along the way, hundreds of children and adults were baptized and came to faith in Jesus Christ, and countless lives have been touched by the grace, hospitality, and generosity of Timberlake Church.

God has been good to us. God's faithfulness has sustained us through times of challenge and of prosperity. As Timberlake continues to grow and to pursue her mission in the name of Jesus Christ, we give all glory to God!



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## Part 2: Mission / Vision / Values / Strategy

### Our Mission

Our mission is to reach, feed, and release people to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

### Our Vision

#### *Worship*

We will offer excellent worship, for the glory of God and the blessing of God's people, in appropriate styles. Worship will feature Biblical preaching and frequent celebration of Holy Communion.

#### *Children & Students*

We will reach the families of our community through excellent children's and student ministry. We will strive to become the preeminent children's and student ministry in Lynchburg.

#### *Discipleship*

We will follow Jesus through Lifegroups, service, and financial giving. Every Timberlake member will participate in these ministries, as signified by their membership vows. We feed one another spiritually through Lifegroups, and we are released to feed others through service and financial giving.

#### *Feeding*

We will feed hungry people in our community. We will address the issue of food insecurity. We will release our people to the places where hunger exists and seek to eliminate hunger in Campbell County, Virginia.

#### *Reaching New People*

We will reach new people for the sake of the gospel of Christ. To that end, we will continually monitor and as necessary improve and add space on campus for the sake of effective ministry. Likewise, as God directs us, we will add additional Timberlake campuses by planting churches or merging with existing churches, or both.



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### Our Values

#### *Grace*

God loves all people, therefore Timberlake loves ALL people.

#### *Hospitality*

God welcomes all people, therefore ALL people are welcome at Timberlake.

#### *Generosity*

God is a generous giver. Every good and perfect gift comes from him. Therefore, Timberlake practices and pursues generosity.

#### *Spiritual Maturity*

The goal of the Christian life is the restoration of the image of God with which we were made. We are called to be holy, as Christ is holy. Together, at Timberlake, we grow in faith and in our likeness to Jesus.

### Our Strategy

Our ministry strategy is to create environments for life change through Biblically-based worship, lifegroups, service and financial giving.



### **Part 3: Christian orthodoxy**

Christian orthodoxy refers to the major tenets of the Christian faith which Timberlake holds in common with the whole Church, based in the Holy Scriptures, informed by the tradition of the believers who have come before us, and lived out in our own experience of God in the world. This is the Christ-centered faith of the Church for over 2000 years, which we profess:

#### God

We worship the one living and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, gracious and everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. God is the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all things, both visible and invisible. The three persons of the Triune Godhead are of one substance and power, co-eternal, distinct yet unified in essence and being (Deut 6:4-5, Mt 28:19-20).

#### Sin and the human condition

God created humans in God's own image and called us good (Gen 1:31). Through Adam and Eve's disobedience, sin and death entered the world (Gen 3). Sin is both an act of disobedience and the condition of our souls, and it separates us from our Creator. Though God banned Adam and Eve from the Garden, and flooded the earth to wipe out wickedness, humanity continued in sin. God made a covenant with the chosen people Israel (Gen 12). In the fullness of time, God the Father sent Jesus Christ the Son to redeem Israel and all who believe in him (Luke 24). Sin remains both past and present reality, therefore humanity stands in need of God's ongoing gift of grace.

#### Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the God-man, fully divine and fully human (Lk 1:35), born of Mary, Son of the Father (Mt 3:16-17), the second person of the Trinity, the Word made flesh in the Incarnation (Jn 1), and Savior of the world (I Jn 4:14). He fed the hungry and announced the coming of the kingdom of God. He suffered, was crucified, died, was buried (Mt 27), and on the third day rose again (Mt 28), to reconcile us to the Father and to grant to us eternal life. In our baptism and at the communion table we participate in his death and resurrection, and we preach the good news of his gospel.



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### The Lordship of Christ

We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, both a theological claim and a confession of faith (Jn 20:28). Jesus Christ is the King of all creation (Ps 10:16), the Head of the church (Col 1:18), and the Master of every true disciple (Rom 10:9). Therefore, we remain subject to his rule in our hearts and lives, our allegiance is due to him, and our theology and worship must be ever directed to his glory. Those who confess him as Lord and believe that God raised him will be saved.

### Resurrection

We believe in the resurrection of the body, of Christ our Messiah and of the whole people of God (I Cor 15). God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day, the determinative event in salvation history and the inauguration of the new age. By his death and resurrection, Christ defeated death, reconciled us to the Father, and provided forgiveness for our sin. Resurrection is the mystery of God's saving work. We celebrate it on Easter and every Lord's Day, and with great hope we share in the risen life of Christ, for he is the resurrection and the life. In our baptism we participate in his resurrection. In the eucharist we share in a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. In the general resurrection, the body of Christ will be raised to eternal life.

### The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, truly and eternally the third person of the Godhead (Acts 1-2). Even as the Spirit was breathed into humankind in creation, the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost for the birth of the Church. The work of the Spirit is the grace of God, to apply the healing mercies of the cross to all believers, calling, baptizing, saving, and sanctifying us for God's good pleasure, and empowering us to be sent out in mission to the world.

### The Bible

Holy Scripture is the self-revelation of Almighty God, and therefore contains all things necessary and sufficient for our salvation, and is without error. It includes all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament. It is a living Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, useful for training and correction, and serves as the authority for our understanding of what is true (II Tim 3:16-17).



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### Salvation

Salvation is through faith alone, not by works, but by the grace of God (Eph 2:8). In creation, humanity exists in original righteousness. Because of the fall, all humanity is born into original sin. God's prevenient grace is offered to all, convicts us by the Spirit, and leads us to repentance. By God's justifying grace the believer is pardoned of sin and accounted as righteous, the result of Christ's work in the atonement. God provides assurance and regeneration; the believer experiences the witness of the Holy Spirit and new birth in Christ. The believer is freed from the guilt of sin, and by God's sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit grows believers in holiness, moving us on to perfection and final salvation, where we will spend eternity in God's heaven.

### The Church

The Church is the body of Christ whose nature is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic (I Cor 12). There is one true church, simultaneously visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth, and Christ is the head. The Church's calling is to worship the living God by the preaching of God's word and the administration of the sacraments, to feed the bodies and souls of the people, to announce the forgiveness of sin in Jesus' name, and to be sent out in mission to the world.

### The Priesthood of All Believers

By virtue of our baptism, every disciple of Jesus is a priest, that is, a minister of the gospel, whose role is to connect others to God by announcing salvation through Jesus Christ, feeding the hungry, and caring for widows and orphans (I Pet 2:9).

### Supporting Documents

In addition to the Christian Scriptures, we look to and believe *The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (established in 1784), the *Apostle's Creed*, and the *Nicene Creed* for truth and instruction on matters of the faith in Jesus Christ, for they may be affirmed by evidence from the Scripture.



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## Part 4: Our evangelical faith

Taken from the Greek *euangelion*, the word evangelical means ‘good news’ or ‘gospel.’ Our evangelical faith is a tradition of the Church of Jesus Christ, centered on the cross, rooted in the Bible’s authority, celebrating the good news of the gospel, and motivated by the urgency of sharing the gospel for the salvation of the world. To be evangelical is to be loosely connected to churches and Christians who are committed to such things. The four primary distinguishing characteristics of the evangelical tradition include:

### The Cross

We confess the centrality of the salvific work of Christ on the cross, who makes possible the redemption of humanity by his death and resurrection (I Cor 1:23).

### The Bible

We hold a high view of the Bible as God’s word and the authority for our lives (II Tim 3:16-17).

### The Gospel

We emphasize the need for all people to have a transformative experience of God’s grace for salvation through Jesus Christ, that we may be born again and have eternal life (John 3).

### The Urgency of our Mission

We prioritize the mission of the church, with urgency, to reach the whole world with the gospel, feeding people spiritually and physically, and releasing them to follow Jesus (Mt 28:19-20).



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## Part 5: Wesleyan theological distinctives

While Timberlake does not belong to a particular denomination, we stand firmly in the theological tradition known as Wesleyanism, a particular way of thinking about God, the Scriptures, and the Christian life, popularized in the 1700's by a priest from the Church of England named John Wesley. Sometimes called Arminianism, it has since been adopted and used by millions of Christians around the world, including Nazarenes, the AME and AME Zion churches, some Pentecostals, and the Anglican Church. Together with them we have received this theology, added to it, deepened it, and sought to live it out. While not exclusive to Wesleyan theology, these theological distinctives serve us as areas of emphasis and distinguishing characteristics of our beliefs. A longer discussion of our theological tradition may be found in our Foundations Document, <https://timberlakechurch.org/foundations/>

### Grace

Grace is the unmerited favor of God (Eph 2:4-7). Prevenient grace means that God loves and welcome all people; therefore, Timberlake loves and welcomes all people. Justifying grace means that God desires the salvation of every person, and has made this salvation available through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, Timberlake proclaims the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. Sanctifying grace means that God is renewing in us his own image with which we were created, such that are becoming more like Jesus. Therefore, Timberlake trains our people as disciples of Jesus in the pursuit of holiness.

### The New Birth

We affirm the vital importance of being born again (John 3). The new birth – sometimes called regeneration – is the fruit of faith in Christ, and God's grace to forgive our sin, reconcile us to himself, and give us new life through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. When one is born again, the marks of the new birth will be evident, namely faith, hope, and love. These are the outward expressions of the inward change.

### The Priority of Worship

As humans we were created to worship the living God (Lev 1-4). Worship remains the priority of Timberlake's ministry. Healthy, life-giving worship will include offering, prayer, music, the proclamation of the Word and a response to it, and the gathering at the Lord's table.



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### The Sacraments

The sacraments of baptism and communion are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, the grand channels of the grace of God whereby we experience the presence of God with us and participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 6:4-5).

Baptism marks the beginning of the disciple's journey of following Jesus, washing away our sin, initiating us into the Church, incorporating us into God's mighty acts of salvation, granting us new birth by water and the Spirit, and marking us as missionaries, sent into the world to love God and neighbor (Acts 2:38). Baptism may be done by immersion, sprinkling, or pouring. While baptism should only be received once (Eph 4:5), frequent acts of remembering one's baptism are encouraged.

Holy Communion is a means of grace and a central act in the life of the church (Lk 22). The sacrament is Eucharist (thanksgiving), a re-presentation (not a repeat) of Christ's crucifixion, the remembrance of his sacrifice for us, an experience of the real presence of Christ with us at the table, and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the eschatological meal in which we anticipate God's preferred future and the culmination of salvation history in heaven where we feast with God and with the saints who have gone before. The celebration of the sacraments is the work of Timberlake's ordained pastors.

### Infant Baptism

Because baptism is a sacrament and primarily the work not of humans but of God's Spirit to claim us as God's children and wash away our sin, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, because baptism is the sign of the new covenant and God has established by circumcision that children shall explicitly be included in his covenant, Timberlake therefore practices baptism of persons of any age, including children (Acts 2:29; Gen 17:11).

### The Frequency of Holy Communion

Timberlake shares in holy communion in corporate worship at all services every week, for seven reasons: It is the command of Christ. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). It is for the forgiveness of sin. "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28). It was the weekly practice of the early church. "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). It is the proclamation of the gospel. "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (I Cor 11:26). It is the communion of the saints. "I pray... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:20). It is our spiritual nourishment. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day" (John 6:54). It is an encounter with the living God. "[Jesus] took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him" (Luke 24:30-31).



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### Personal & Social Holiness

Holiness is the character of God and the goal of the Christian life (Isa 6:3). By the Spirit, God is restoring in us the divine image with which we were created as we grow in our likeness to Jesus Christ. This journey of sanctification is both personal and social, for it is grounded in personal habits of piety and mercy, as well as the spiritual formation of the church community.

### Faith & Works

Only faith will save us, by the grace of God, but true faith will necessarily produce good works, which are the fruit of our faith and our grateful response to God's gift of salvation (Jas 2:18).

### Evangelism & the Sacraments

While most churches tend to be evangelical or sacramental, we aim to be both. We seek to marry the long-separated theological emphases of evangelism and the sacraments (Mt 28:19-20; I Cor 11:23-26). We prioritize the preaching and study of Scripture and the ministry of personal evangelism together with the gathering at the Lord's table for communion and the baptism of new believers.

### Ministry with the Poor

Even as the Old Testament prophets called Israel to care for widows, orphans, and foreigners (Isa 1:17), Jesus put the poor at the center of his ministry (Lk 4:18). Wesleyans have a faithful tradition of establishing schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and John Wesley himself famously walked door to door among the wealthy, begging money to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Therefore, Timberlake seeks to care for the poor both materially and spiritually, and thus reflect the character of the Kingdom of God.



## **Part 6: Matters of Social Concern, Conscience, and Living the Christian Life**

In the work of Christian theology and within the faith of the Church, there are various matters which are important, but which do not rise to the level of essential orthodoxy. These include matters of social concern, of conscience, and of living the Christian life, such as peace and violence, marriage, human sexuality, methods for prayer, environmental stewardship, economics, the use of tobacco and alcohol, suicide, euthanasia, war, immigration, and health care.

The Scriptures remain our authoritative guide for thinking about such things.

Members of Timberlake are not required to subscribe to a particular belief or manner of thinking when it comes to these matters. There is room for disagreement. John Wesley advised Christians: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” We pursue unity on essentials of the faith, such as the Lordship of Christ. We allow for freedom of thought on non-essentials, such as methods for Christian discipleship and political opinions. In all these things, we strive for grace and understanding.

All Timberlake people are encouraged to pursue authentic discipleship, following the teaching and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the highest ideals of the Christian life. We are guided by God’s Word in the Bible, the movement of the Spirit in our lives, the faith of the Church which has been handed down to us, the counsel of pastors and church elders, and the wisdom of Christian friends. The following Biblical principles shape our thinking on these matters:

- **LOVE:** We are called to love God and neighbor (Mk 12:29-31).
- **LIFE:** God is continually at work in the world for goodness and life, and the boundaries of life belong not to humans but to God (John 10:10).
- **GRACE & TRUTH:** The example that Jesus has given us fully embraces both grace and truth (John 1:17).
- **FAMILY:** Families are important to God and to us as essential systems for nurturing one another in the Christian life (Gen 2:24; I Tim 5:8).
- **STEWARDSHIP:** Because everything belongs to God, we are accountable to God for faithful stewardship of all of life’s blessings and resources (Ps 24:1).
- **PEACE:** Our Lord Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6), and as his disciples we are called to be peacemakers (Mt 5:9).
- **JUSTICE:** Our God is just, and as his disciples we are called to work for justice (Mic 6:8).
- **FREEDOM & SERVICE:** Christ has set us free to serve others (Gal 5:13)
- **THE LEAST PERSONS:** Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and is disguised in the form of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, and those in prison (Mt 25), therefore we serve the least persons.



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## Part 7: Membership

Any person may become a member of Timberlake Church, provided he or she makes the following steps:

- Attends Starting Point
- Meets with one of the pastors
- Is baptized (if not already baptized)
- Publicly professes faith and commitment in corporate worship, giving affirmative answers to the following vows:
  - Do you repent of your sin?
  - Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, and promise to serve him as your Lord?
  - As a baptized follower of Jesus, will you remain a faithful member of his Church?
  - As a member of Timberlake, will you remain committed to worship, a lifegroup, service, and financial giving?

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

*-Ephesians 3:20-21*