

# FOUNDATIONS

## Information about Gateway Church

Dear Guests,

We welcome you to Gateway Church. We hope you have been warmly received. We appreciate your interest in Gateway and pray that God will guide you to the church family in which you will be most useful to his Kingdom.

We appreciate your willingness to prayerfully look for a church home and take the time to participate in the Foundations class of Gateway Church. We believe that the process for finding a new church home is best made with all the facts. This course, called *Foundations*, is designed to help you make an informed decision about becoming a member of Gateway.

Jesus is the foundation for all Christian faith and churches. However, each local congregation has its own history, personality, and practices. This document is our attempt to clearly and honestly describe our history, beliefs, ministry, organization, and practices.

We always welcome for your questions. Please feel free to ask us at any time.

Sincerely,

Jeff Medders,  
Senior Minister

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### I. History

Gateway Church was born as a dream between 2000 and 2004 in the lives of Christians living in this area. The dream was for a nondenominational church that accepted people where they were and loved them into the body of Christ. Gateway Church was born as a ministry of Little Rock Church. The ministry team of Gateway Church began meeting as a prayer team in late 2005. Little Rock Church is a nondenominational Church in Southwest Little Rock that is over 20 years old. (For more information on Little Rock Church, please visit the website at [www.littlerockchurch.org](http://www.littlerockchurch.org).)

Gateway Church began meeting as a new church family in January 2007 and had our formal opening on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2007 with 78 people in attendance. Everyone present was encouraged and thankful for what God had begun. Gateway Church is excited about the future and thankful for her past!

## II. MISSION, VISION, AND PURPOSES

### MISSION STATEMENT

“We desire to be a community of believers in Jesus Christ that loves the Lord God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loves our neighbor as ourselves.” (from Mark 12:29-31)

### Vision Statement

To become a relevant church of 300 believers that will fulfill our mission to love our God and love our neighbors by reaching our community (especially that who do not have a church home) through living our purposes as we plant one new church by 2012.

### Purposes

- Worship God (Worship)
- Bring the Lost and Hurting to Christ (Outreach)
- Pursue Unity in the Body of Christ (Unity)
- Mature Followers of Christ (Maturity)
- Equip Members for Ministry (Equipping)

## Beliefs Statement of Gateway Church

- We believe in the One True God, who spoke into existence the universe and everything in it. We believe that by that same Word he maintains and sustains everything today. God is all knowing, all-powerful, and fills the universe with His presence. (Hebrews 1:10 - 12; 11:3)
- We believe that the One God exists in three distinct personalities; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- We believe that God the Father loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)
- We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He gave up being equal to God, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless, perfect life, shed His blood and died on the cross, was buried but raised from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God and intercedes on our behalf. (Philippians 2: 5 - 11; Romans 8:34)
- We believe that the Holy Spirit was sent by Christ and personally indwells everyone who becomes a Christian. He provides us with comfort, guidance, and the ability to understand the Word. He intercedes for us in our prayers and provides the motivation and ability to work for God's pleasure. He also convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 14:15 - 31; 16:5 - 11; 1 Corinthians 2: 11 - 16; Romans 8:26 - 27)
- We believe that all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. Because of sin our relationship with God was broken and we stood condemned before Him. The good news of the Gospel is that Christ took our sins upon himself and died in our place. We are forgiven and saved because, and only because, Jesus Christ shed his blood on the Cross. This salvation is a gift of God, given to us by His Grace through our faith in Jesus Christ. There is nothing that we can do to earn our salvation. (Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 15:1 - 8; Ephesians 2:1 - 10)
- We believe that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ and to a decision to live under God's saving grace, we are commanded to confess publicly that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, to

- We believe that when we are baptized into Jesus Christ, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit adds us to Christ's body, the Church. Through the power of the Spirit, we are called to put to death the sinful deeds of the flesh and to walk in a new life of discipleship under His direct and continual guidance. (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:12 - 14; 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 13)
- We believe the Church is the body of Jesus Christ on earth. We are here to worship God, carry out His mission of seeking the lost and caring for the needy, and to encourage and serve our brothers and sisters in the faith. (Ephesians 1:22 - 23; Matthew 28:18 - 20; Hebrews 3:12 - 14)
- We believe each member in the Body of Christ is a minister and has unique Spiritual gifts to carry out God's mission here on earth. The purpose of the gifts are to build up the Body of Christ, serve the needy, and preach and teach the Word of God to the lost. (1 Corinthians 12:18; 1 Peter 4:10 - 11; Ephesians 4:11 - 16)
- We believe that the Lord's Supper (communion) is a valuable aspect of our gathering times. We regard it as a high priority during our assemblies. The Lord's supper is done in remembrance of Christ, until he comes again. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ and is symbolic in nature, allowing us to demonstrate our faith and obedience. (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 11:26, 1 Cor. 10:16-18, 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
- We believe the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament are God breathed and error-free in their original form. The purposes of the Scriptures are to teach us about God, to lead us to faith in Christ, and to reveal God's will for our lives. Everything we do, both individually and collectively as the church, must be in accordance with the teachings and guidance we have from the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:15-16)
- We believe that Jesus Christ will return, and that this hope has a vital bearing on the life and service of the believer. We believe in the resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting

separation from God. (1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18; 1 Cor. 15; Hebrews 10:26 - 31)

- At Gateway, we sincerely try to follow the Bible and its teaching. However, our ability to logically figure everything out is not the basis for our acceptability before God. Our salvation is based on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. What we must be right about is the fact that we cannot be right about everything and are therefore completely dependent on God's graciousness and mercy.

## Frequently Asked Questions

● **How does a person become a member of the Gateway Church family?**  
There are four important things that we ask each person becoming a part of this church family to do: 1) Attend the Foundations Class offered monthly to learn more about Gateway Church, 2) be or become a baptized believer in Christ and commit to a lifetime of personal spiritual growth. 3) Share in our church family through participation in a house church. We recommend trying one near your home. And 4) Have a discussion with one of our shepherds to let them know of your commitment to this church family.

It is our desire to support, encourage, and shepherd each person at Gateway Church. The informal discussion with our shepherds about your desire to commit to this church family will help them know your history as a believer, current needs, and goals for serving in the body. After this visit, each person desiring to be member of the Gateway Church family can be acknowledged and prayed over in our assembly.

We will gladly accept any seeker to our assemblies, but everyone desiring to become a member of our body, and to be shepherded by our elders, is asked to commit to active participation in one of the house churches of Gateway Church.

● **Is Gateway Church part of a denomination? Who does Gateway Church fellowship?**

Our intent is to be Christians only, nothing more, nothing less. We therefore consider ourselves “non-denominational,” since we do not give ourselves any particular label other than that given to us by God, nor do we align ourselves exclusively with any particular denomination. We are a body of believers who have placed our hope in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord. He called us into existence at this place in our community and at this point in time to serve him. We are part of the church that began almost 2,000 years ago on the day of Pentecost, and continues to this day throughout the world. We pursue fellowship with all who have been justified by faith in Christ.

● **How is Gateway Church led?**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of His body, the Church. Everyone in the church is in submission to him. We also believe that as described in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit appoints men to serve as elders, overseers and pastors of each local church. These men are charged with following Jesus Christ and overseeing the affairs of the church, and shepherding the church family.

The New Testament describes another office in the church, that of evangelist or minister. In our context, these evangelists and ministers have specialized training and education and are charged by the elders to lead and equip our church in fulfilling our purposes.

Gateway Church is a church plant of Little Rock Church. Little Rock Church is a 21-year old church in Southwest Little Rock. The elders of Little Rock Church will oversee the mission and ministry of Gateway Church for two years. After that time, Gateway Church will have her own leadership team of elders and ministers.

Gateway Church is a new church family and has a leadership team consisting of seven men. Brad Dell is an elder/ shepherd, Jeff Medders is the Senior Minister, and Brooks Nichols, Pete Harden, Kevin Birdwell, Ryan Russell, and Jim Minor are house church leaders. This group of men is the leadership team of Gateway Church and will work under the authority of the elders of Little Rock Church until January 2009.

● **What does Gateway Church believe about salvation and baptism?**

We believe that we are saved by God's grace, through our faith, not by our works—salvation is a free gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-10). Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins so that we can have a reconciled relationship with God (1 John 2:2). We enter into this relationship through faith in Christ (Romans 3:22).

Faith in Christ must be demonstrated in obedience to Christ. Christ commands that we repent of our sins (Luke 13:3), confess before others that He is Lord (Matthew 10:32), and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Baptism represents giving our lives over to Christ. We believe baptism is connected to salvation because of the following Scriptures:

- The Apostle Peter refers to baptism as an act that “now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. . .” (1 Peter 3:21).
- “And now, what are you waiting for? Get up, *be baptized* and wash your sins away, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).
- On the day that the Christian church began, Peter said to the crowd, “Repent and *be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
- “We were therefore buried with him [Jesus] through *baptism* into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:4).
- “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

We believe immersion is the biblical method of baptism, as it “re-enacts” the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for each Christian. We also believe that baptism is only for believers who are old enough to choose it for themselves. Every member of Gateway is a baptized believer, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Jesus himself was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15), and we invite others to follow in His steps.

### ● What does Gateway Church believe about the role of men and women?

Scripture teaches that men and women are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Paul writes in Galatians 3:28-29 “there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, there is male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.” Men and women are joint heirs in Christ. All men and women in Christ have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit.

We not only affirm the biblical teaching on the worth of all persons, but we also believe the Bible teaches that God created man and woman to fulfill different, but complementary, roles which are rooted in their unique, sexual identity (Gen. 2:17-25, 3:6-7). God created the man with the primary role of "servant leader." He created woman with the primary role of "helper." When the authors of the New Testament provided practical instructions on the roles of men and women in the church and in the home, their teaching was based on God's design in creation.

We believe that both men and women are called to use their gifts of the Holy Spirit in ways that serve in the body of Christ. Women have been blessed by our elders to participate in the life of our church and worship assembly in many ways including leading of ministries, teaching children, reading scripture, participating in the praise team, wording a prayer, serving as greeters, sharing a testimony, and passing communion.

In 1 Timothy 2:12 the apostle Paul writes about roles, "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise spiritual authority over a man, but to remain quiet." We believe that women should not serve in roles in which they would be preaching or teaching in our worship assembly and house churches.

### ● Why does Gateway Church take communion each Sunday?

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a symbolic act of faith and obedience. We find in scripture four primary purposes for the Lord's supper or communion:

- To remember Christ until he comes (I Corinthians 11:23-26)
- To symbolize unity in the body of Christ, the church. (I Corinthians 10:16)
- To proclaim Christ's death and love for the World (I Corinthians 11:26)
- Self examination (I Corinthians 11:27-28)

Gateway Church serves communion each Sunday during the morning worship assembly and at other special times of worship. Acts 20:7 refers to the early church breaking bread together on the first day of the week (Sunday). It is also likely that communion was shared regularly, even daily, by the early church (Acts 2:42-47). Focusing on our Lord, unity in the body, Christ's love for the world, and self-examination are vital to a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ.

● **Is Gateway Church “Charismatic”?**

Strictly speaking, Gateway Church is not a “Charismatic” church. We do believe that the Holy Spirit has a powerful impact on our lives, primarily to form us into the image of Jesus Christ. We do not, however, practice “speaking in tongues” during our assemblies. It is important to note that we do not consider personal belief or practice in this area to be a formal test of Christian fellowship. We have always had members in our body with diverse views and practices in this area. While those who desire a consistent practice of the Charismatic gifts may not find fulfillment in our assemblies, we in no way want to make those who consider themselves to be "Charismatic" to feel unwelcome in our midst.

● **Who is the minister of Gateway Church?**

Jeff Medders is the Senior Minister for Gateway Church and coordinates the mission and ministry of the church family.

## **V. Conclusion**

It is our sincere desire to help you find the place in the Kingdom where you are called to serve and connect. Thank you for taking time to complete the Foundations course. If you have further questions, please feel free to meet with Jeff or one of our house church leaders.

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