

Silver Beach Community Church

Our DOCTRINE



Our DISTINCTIVES

Bellingham, Washington

reetings from **Silver Beach Community Church**

The mission of Silver Beach Community Church (SBCC) is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. We are a non-denominational church committed to the clear teaching and application of the Bible. We have provided this booklet to assist you in getting to know us. The following pages contain our *Doctrinal Statement* and *Distinctives*. Other informative materials are available in our information rack located in the church narthex. As you learn more about SBCC, we hope to have the privilege of learning more about you and how we can assist you in knowing, worshipping, and serving the Lord. We would be delighted to meet with you personally to answer any questions you have. Feel free to call the church office (734-5228) to arrange an appointment.

The SBCC Elders

Our Doctrinal Statement

A. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God, the final and all-sufficient authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-4,20-21).

B. The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, one Being in essence, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; John 16:5-15; 2 Corinthians 13:14; also, see references for C, D, and E below).

C. The Person and Work of the Father

1. We believe that the Heavenly Father, Who is Almighty God, created all things through Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-16; Revelation 4:8-11).
2. We believe that God the Father, Who is love, purposed before the foundation of the world to send His only begotten Son to redeem out of fallen humanity all of His elect ones (John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 13:8).
3. We believe that God the Father, Who is sovereign, chose the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestined them to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will (Ephesians 1:3-6).

D. The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God and Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be Deity, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1-2,14; Luke 1:35).
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth, and thus He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice. Our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24).
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

E. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).
2. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; and that it is the privilege and duty of all believers to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20,27).

F. Creation and the Flood

1. We believe that God, by His omnipotence, created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in six literal earth days of evening and morning cycles, and that the earth is relatively young according to the chronologies in Scripture. This creation was perfect until the entrance of sin brought about by Satan's fall and the fall of man (Genesis 1:1-2:3; Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 11:3).
2. We believe that God judged the first world, after it descended from the fall of man down to a state of universal evil, by destroying it with a literal, worldwide, cataclysmic flood; and that Noah found grace in the eyes of God, and God brought Noah and his family through the flood to repopulate the earth and maintain His promise to send a Redeemer by the seed of the first woman, Eve (Genesis 6-8; 2 Peter 3:3-6).

G. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, a fallen angel, the author of sin, and the cause of the fall of man. He is the open and declared enemy of God and man, yet God is sovereign over him, and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Job 1:6-7,12; 2:6; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

H. The Creation of Man, the Fall, and Total Depravity of Man

We believe the first man, Adam, was created by the immediate and special intervention of God, as opposed to any process of development. God breathed into man “the breath of life” and he became a living soul, bearing the image of God. In Adam’s sin the entire human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. The probation and fall of man is neither an allegory nor a myth, but true history. In his fallen state, man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition, including an inability to exercise saving faith in Christ apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; 8:5-8; Ephesians 2:1-5,12; John 6:44,65).

I. Election

We believe that God unconditionally chose the elect according to His foreknowledge and purpose, and predestined them unto salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glory (Romans 9:14-26; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2:4-7; Titus 3:3-7).

J. Salvation

1. We believe that salvation is the gift of God given to the elect by grace and received through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
2. We believe that salvation has past, present, and future aspects. The past component, being our justification, freed us from the penalty of sin. The present component, being our sanctification, frees us from the power of sin. The future component, being our glorification, will free us from the presence of sin (Romans 3:23-26; 5:1-2; 8:28-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:13).

K. The Security, Assurance, and Perseverance of the Saints

1. We believe that all the elect will come to Christ and are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).
2. We believe that it is the privilege of the saints to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God’s Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to gratify the lusts of the flesh (John 5:24; Romans 13:11-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 5:10-13).
3. We believe that the grace of God, operating through the Holy Spirit, disciplines God’s true children and maintains the faith of the elect as they work out their salvation with fear and trembling until the day of redemption (Philippians 1:3-6; 2:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-8).

L. The Struggle Between Flesh and Spirit in the Life of a Saint

We believe that every born-again person possesses a new nature in Christ, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the flesh (old man, old self) through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The flesh (old man, old self) was and is crucified with Christ that sin might be done away with; however, all claims to the eradication of the flesh in this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:5-7,13-14; 8:12-14; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:8-2:2; 3:5-9).

M. Separation

We believe that all the saints should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God (Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

N. Evangelism and Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saints to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all mankind (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

O. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

1. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and that the gifts are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. Speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).
2. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for those who are spiritually weak or physically ill; and that God can and still does perform the miraculous according to His will (John 15:7; James 5:13-15; 1 John 5:14-15).

P. The Church

2. We believe that the invisible, universal Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age. The Church was born on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture. We believe that the Church was a mystery in the Old Testament and is distinct from the nation of Israel (Acts 2:1-21,38-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:11-3:6; 5:25-27,32).
3. We believe that the establishment and continuance of visible, local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17,28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
4. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control, other than Christ as Head and Scripture as God's written revelation (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1-4; 1 Corinthians 3:9,16; 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
5. We recognize the ordinances of believers' water baptism and the Lord's supper (communion) as scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Q. Last Things

1. We believe in the personal, imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven year tribulation to translate (rapture) His Church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; Titus 2:13).
2. We believe that immediately following the removal of the Church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out on the unbelieving world. This tribulation period will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth with His saints (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16; 19:11-16).
3. We believe that after the tribulation period Jesus Christ will rule on the earth on the throne of David and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years (the millennium). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Christ over Israel and all the nations of the earth. We believe this is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience. The result of Israel's disobedience was that they were temporarily set aside during the Church age, but will again be awakened through repentance to enter the land of blessing. We believe that a literal interpretation of Scripture conveys this clear distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church, and the unique role each plays in past, present, and future events (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 27:21-28; 36:22-37; Daniel 7:18,22; Zechariah 8:1-17; Matthew 21:43; Romans 11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-7).

4. We believe that after the closing of the millennium, the elements of heaven and earth are to be dissolved and replaced with a new heaven and earth, wherein only righteousness dwells. Following this, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven from God and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Ephesians 5:5; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21-22).

R. The Judgment and the Eternal State

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6,12-13).
2. We believe that the souls of true believers are, after death, absent from the body and present with the Lord. Every believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to have his life examined and receive his rewards. At the first resurrection, the souls of the saints, which have been in conscious bliss, will be united with their glorified bodies to be forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 15:20-58; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6).
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15).

In subscribing to the preceding articles of faith, we by no means set aside, or undervalue, any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This statement reflects our best understanding of Scripture and therefore substantial agreement as determined by the elders is requisite for membership in the Silver Beach Community Church.

Our Distinctives

Our distinctives help to convey the positions, practices, and personality of Silver Beach Community Church. Every local church has distinctives whether or not they are in print. We have chosen to articulate and publish our distinctives as a means of candidly informing visitors and potential church members where our church stands on important issues pertaining to church life. We believe this is very important and helps people to make a well-informed decision relative to choosing a church home.

1. Our High View of God

We believe that SBCC exists for the primary purpose of knowing and glorifying God. We strive to know the one, true, holy God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. We want to grow in our reverence, awe, worship, obedience, and love of God. We agree with A.W. Tozer when he writes, “The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted it for one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly un-worthy of thinking, worshipping men. The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us.” To accomplish what God wants for SBCC we believe we must start and finish with a high view of Him.

2. Our High View of the Bible

We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and totally sufficient Word of God. We believe the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Although cultures and human philosophies change, God's Word, His character, His commands, and man's fallen nature never change. Therefore, we believe that the timeless Word of God is relevant and completely reliable for anything a person faces no matter where or when he lives. Because we embrace this high view of Scripture we seek to study and apply it faithfully in every facet of our ministry and church life.

3. Our Form of Church Government

We believe that Christ is the head of His church, and that He mediates His rule in the church through biblically qualified elders. It is essential that the congregation affirm only those men who qualify, aspire, and faithfully serve in the function of an elder. Elders are commanded to oversee and shepherd the flock, and the congregation is commanded to submit to their loving leadership. The church functions best when the shepherds/elders function in unanimity and the flock follows submissively.

4. Our Commitment to Equip Ministers (you)

We are committed to discipling and equipping people to prepare them for ministry, not just plugging warm bodies into empty positions. Our programs will only be as strong as the people who serve in them. We desire that every ministry position be filled by a growing disciple who is equipped, called, burdened, and committed to serve in that capacity. Following this pattern produces joyful, confident ministers, and more fruitful ministry.

5. Our Lay Shepherding Style of Ministry

While it is the responsibility of every elder to shepherd the flock, we recognize that people can only receive adequate nurture if there are many people within the body offering pastoral care to one another. God calls each of us to minister the "one anothers" within the church family. In order to both give and receive personal care, we exhort our members to actively assimilate into the church through faithful attendance, small groups, classes, serving in ministry, and other body-life opportunities.

6. Our Commitment to Marriages and Families

Building strong Christian families is a priority at SBCC. We believe in the sanctity of marriage, and that God hates divorce. We believe that parents are responsible for the consistent training, discipline, and protection of their children. Our programs may assist, but never replace, parents as the primary disciplers of their children.

Recommended reading: "What We Teach About Divorce and Remarriage"

7. Our Intergenerational Mindset

At SBCC we strive to cultivate an environment that mingles all ages together as much as possible. Age segregation is the invention of secular humanists, not biblical Christianity. While the popular trend is to segregate into peer groups, greater maturity is fostered by blending mature saints with younger, immature believers. Therefore, we do not promote the formation of "youth groups" or "singles groups." We are building the body of Christ, not cultivating a separate youth/singles culture. We particularly encourage parents to be actively involved with their sons and daughters into adulthood.

Recommended reading: "SBCC Teen Discipleship Philosophy"

8. Our Position on the Roles of Men and Women

The Scriptures teach that men and women are equally created in God's image, and in relation to salvation and spiritual position in Christ, both genders are equal. Although equal, men and women have distinct roles in the home and church

as designed by God. In the home the man is to provide loving headship and servant leadership. He is responsible to love, nurture, and protect his wife and children, as well as provide for the physical needs of his household. The priority for the woman is within her home. She is to submit to her husband and work at home serving her family (it is recognized that singles and women without children in the home have unique freedom for employment and perhaps more extensive ministry). In the church, men and women are to use their spiritual gifts in ministering to the body according to biblical design. One notable limitation is that women are not to teach men or have authority over men in the church.

9. Our Commitment to Biblical Counseling

We believe that all of the answers to man's problems are found in the person of Jesus Christ and His Word. Therefore, Jesus Christ is central in all counseling. We believe in the total sufficiency of the Bible in dealing with every problem. Our trust is not in the vain philosophies of man, but in the power of the Holy Spirit (the "Counselor") in using Scripture to both save and sanctify sinners. Therefore, counselees are exhorted to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, take personal responsibility for their problems, and commit to obeying biblical patterns/commandments in their thoughts, words, and behavior.

10. Our Worship Philosophy

Our goal in our worship services is to glorify God, not to entertain people. We believe that acceptable worship to God comes from an obedient life and a pure heart. Our desire is to direct people's focus toward God, rather than observing a performance. In order to guard the purity of our worship we ask only spiritually qualified individuals to lead in our services. We only use hymns, choruses, and songs that are doctrinally sound. Without apology, our worship services are *conservative*, relatively speaking. However, we do believe that a variety of instruments and both traditional and contemporary songs can be utilized to the glory of God. We encourage all members of our congregation to exercise deference in regard to issues of personal taste and preference in worship.

11. Our Perspective on Church Growth

We do not embrace the modern church growth movement that tends to assess growth in terms of attendance numbers, budgets, and buildings rather than the development of spiritual maturity and fruit. We believe a church is growing when its members are increasing in their knowledge of God, personal holiness, and obedience to biblical mandates. Evangelism is not the primary goal of our typical worship services. While every member should strive to make visitors and unbelievers feel warmly welcomed, our focus is on pleasing God with acceptable worship and faithful preaching. We gather for worship and edification, and scatter to evangelize.

12. Our Non-charismatic Theology

We believe that certain spiritual gifts had a unique purpose in the first century church, and gradually ceased as the New Testament scriptures were completed. These are often referred to as "sign gifts" (tongues, healing, miracles, etc.). We do not teach or allow the promotion or practice of the sign gifts at SBCC. Our position on this issue is not intended to belittle our charismatic brethren. However, we do believe that a person whose theology and practice differs from SBCC on this point may likely be more fulfilled in a charismatic congregation.

13. Our Practice of Church Discipline

The local church has the dual responsibilities of encouraging virtue and repressing vice. Jesus Christ commanded the church to discipline itself following a specific pattern. Discipline should be a regular, normal practice that begins with the loving confrontation of sin and is primarily the responsibility of the individual believers in the body (not the leadership) toward one another. The goal of church discipline is the purity of the church and the restoration of the sinning believer. The severity of the discipline depends on the nature and circumstances of the sin. Becoming a member of SBCC is a person's statement of submission to the practice of church discipline.

14. Our Missions Support Philosophy

It is our vision to equip, commission, and support missionaries from our own congregation. We refer to these people as our “home church missionaries.” While we continue to support other missionaries that SBCC has been associated with for many years, we only increase the financial support of our home church missionaries. Over the long term this philosophy will promote: closer relationships between missionaries and our members, greater financial support for SBCC missionaries, more restful furloughs, and more personal involvement in missions on the part of our members. Our commitment to evangelism is not limited to the foreign field. Acts 1:8 commands us to witness to our “Jerusalem.” Every member of SBCC is exhorted to be an ambassador for Christ in his/her sphere of influence.

Recommended reading: SBCC Missions Policy

15. Our Stewardship Policy

SBCC is committed to biblical principles of avoiding the sin of de-faulting on borrowed money, and of steadfast contentedness in God. Our church’s conservative guidelines on borrowing and the use of re-sources can be found in our Stewardship Policy. The Stewardship Policy discusses many aspects of debt and borrowing and states that SBCC will not enter into unsecured debt. Avoiding unsecured debt has many benefits: it obeys many biblical principles, it strengthens faith, it allows God one more way to direct our plans, it is a good ex-ample to our families, it is safest, it helps us avoid an unhealthy em-phasis on money, and we feel it is the *best* way to operate our church and glorify God. In view of this policy it is incumbent upon our members to give faithfully, and the congregation to plan and save wisely, in order to pay for large projects.

Recommended reading: SBCC Stewardship Policy

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