

Ridgeway Church St Albans

Doctrinal Distinctives

We recognise that all who have been enabled to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and are seeking to live under his Lordship are part of God's people (1 Peter 2:10). We recognise that many churches are Gospel churches but that within the Evangelical constituency there is a variety of emphases. This document identifies certain matters of theology and practice in which Ridgeway Church St Albans is to a greater or lesser extent distinctive, vis-à-vis other contemporary churches.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of our position on issues that are potentially contentious among churches at the present time. Nor is its purpose to highlight or in any sense promote disunity among believers.

On the contrary, it is a guide to what the elders are agreed upon, it reflects current practice and is intended to enable potential church members and leaders to know where we stand with a view to reducing the likelihood of future disunity.

1. We teach and practise Reformed Theology.

We are fully persuaded of God's sovereignty in all things (Ephesians 1:11).

We appoint elders who are and remain fully persuaded of the following:

- That God chooses some people to be saved, despite their sinfulness and not on account of any foreseen merit or faith in them, only because of his sovereign good pleasure (John 6:37-44, Romans 8:28-30, Ephesians 1:3-14);
- That this sovereign choice is compatible with the command that all people should repent of their sin and believe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that it does not negate anyone's responsibility to believe (John 5:36-47, Acts 2:38-41, Romans 10:5-15);
- That God calls people, through the proclamation of the Gospel, and works in them by his Spirit, so that they respond with saving faith (Romans 8:30, 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, Ephesians 2:4-10, James 1:18);
- That all those whom God has chosen, all who are truly born again, will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians to the end of their lives (John 6:37-40, 10:28-29, Romans 8:30).
- We are aware of the danger of false teachers entering or emerging in any church. We are committed to guarding the apostolic faith carefully. (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

2. We are committed to expository preaching.

We believe that the church is built up through the preaching of the Word of God (Colossians 1:28).

We aim to teach the whole Word of God, because all Scripture is God-breathed and is God's means of teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

3. We are committed to evangelism, seeking prayerfully to make Christ known through the proclamation of the Word and through Godly living.

We preach Christ crucified, risen and ascended (1 Corinthians 1:17 - 2:5); we look to the Lord for the harvest (Luke 10:2, Psalm 127:1).

We recognise the need not only for the Gospel to be proclaimed, but for the life of the church and the lives of its members to adorn the Gospel (Titus 2:10).

4. We are committed to training and sending out Gospel workers.

We recognise that there is a shortage of workers. We are committed to praying for and training workers (Matthew 9:38).

5. We teach and encourage the baptism of believers.

We teach that those who respond to the Gospel in repentance and faith should be baptised (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38).

We recognise that some believers in good conscience practise infant baptism.

6. We rejoice in the work of the Holy Spirit, as taught in Scripture.

We recognise that the Holy Spirit works to bring glory to the Son. He inspired the Scriptures and enables his people to understand them. He convicts the world of sin and applies the work of salvation to the elect. Through the Spirit, God's love is poured into the hearts of his people (Romans 5:5). He enables us to grow in Christ-likeness and to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:1-26). He empowers us for service. He is the guarantee of our eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:14).

Baptism of the Spirit refers to conversion (1 Corinthians 12:13). No second or further baptism of the Spirit is taught by Scripture although we seek his ongoing work and filling (Acts 4:31).

We recognise that the canon of Scripture is closed (Hebrews 1:1, Revelation 22:18). We recognise that we have a sufficient Word from God in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15-17) and therefore focus on the teaching of the Word of God. As we do so, the Holy Spirit enables us to understand the Word and apply it, and so transforms us by it.

7. We recognise male leadership in the church and in family life to be consistent with God's ordering of relationships. We are committed to upholding Biblical relationships.

We appoint properly gifted men as our pastor-teachers and elders (1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).

We encourage husbands to be servant leaders and wives to encourage them in this role (Ephesians 5:21-33).

We affirm the essential contribution of both men and women to the life of the church and the task of contending for the Gospel (Philippians 4:3).

We affirm sex to be a good gift of God intended only for heterosexual marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). All extra-marital sexual practices, including homosexual practices, are sinful and wrong (Genesis 2:24, Romans 1:26-27). We are not willing to be actively or passively complicit in sin in relation to any activities of this church (1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Timothy 5:22).