GRACE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH AND THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

EFCA Statement of Faith:

THE HOLY SPIRIT: 6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

Our Christian faith is grounded in the objective facts of history found in the Bible and centered in regarding the person and work of Christ, but these facts are subjectively experienced through the life changing personal work of the Holy Spirit. The barriers of space and time are overcome, and the life of the one man, Jesus, touches our lives today. God’s gospel is applied to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The prophets look forward to the Kingdom when the Spirit would work as he never had before (Ezek 36:24-28). The Spirit brings about the incarnation of the Son, anoints him at his baptism, leads him, empowers his ministry. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came in power as the prophets had promised, and he regenerates and indwells every true believer He is powerfully and personally at work bearing his fruit in our lives and exalting Christ through us. He is the Counselor who convicts of sin, illumines, guides, equips, empowers, leads us into truth (John 15:26; 16:13) and centrally mediates the presence of Christ. Jesus tells us that until he returns, it is better to have the Spirit working as he is than to have Jesus with us as the apostles did (John 16:5-11). If God is truly at work in and through our lives it will necessarily be through the work of the Spirit. We must seek, depend on, love, and worship the precious, promised, person of the Spirit.

The Spirt works in miraculous ways but the normative work he does is in bearing the fruit in our lives as he makes us like Christ and uses us to draw people to Jesus (Gal 5:22). His power and presence show that we are truly in Christ (Rom 8:9-16). We should always be grateful for what the Spirit has done but also eagerly seeking to be filled, empowered, and enabled by him in fresh and powerful ways. When he does work supernaturally, we should humbly yield to his work and be biblically discerning (1 John 4:1). Our discernment should not quench the Sprit (1 Thess 5:19-20). When he works in miraculously (e.g. healing, prophetic insight, or tongues), as always, the goal is orderly edification motivated by love and grounded in intelligible instruction for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor 14:26-40). We need to seek the Spirit’s work, grounded in the word, that transforms us to be like Christ and a gospel advancing light in the world. We cannot let our experiences (good or bad) or personalities, traditions, or personal preferences determine how we are willing to be edified and instructed by the Spirit’s gracious ministry.