

ARTICLES OF FAITH

First Baptist Church, Faribault MN

1. The Scriptures

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 1 Cor. 2:13; John 17:17; John 10:35; Heb. 1:1, 2; Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4).

2. The True God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; that He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exod. 20:2, 3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; John 4:24; 1 Kings 8:27; Eph. 1:11; Ps. 103:19; Gen. 1:1; Isa. 6:2-4; Mark 12:30).

3. Christ

We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who shared the Father's glory and created the world; that He became truly human by means of a miraculous conception produced in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit; that in coming to earth He did not give up any of His divine attributes but voluntarily limited their use under the authority of the Father; that He truly experienced human life and death, that He bodily rose from the grave and ascended into heaven where He is again glorified and serving as the believer's High Priest forever remaining fully God and fully man, the two distinct natures united in one person (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; 2:52; 24:36-48, 50, 51; John 1:1, 2, 10, 14; 5:19; 17:5; 20:1-29; Acts 1:3, 9-11; Rom. 1:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Eph. 1:20; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:17, 18; 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5; 3:16; Heb. 1:2, 8; 4:14, 15; 7:26; Rev. 22:16).

4. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relationship to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We believe the Bible disavows the authenticity of the sign gifts for today, such as prophecy, speaking in

tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing (John 14:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5, 6; Eph. 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 12:8-13, 28-31; 13:8-12; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3, 4; Gen. 6:3; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 1 Pet. 1:2).

5. *The Devil or Satan*

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10; 2 Tim. 2:6; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 3:6; Matt. 12:24; Matt. 25:41).

6. *Creation*

We believe the biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. We adhere to the view of literal 24-hour days of creation (Gen. 1, 2; Col. 1:16, 17; John 1:3; Heb. 11:3; 1 Cor. 15:45; Exod. 20:11).

7. *The Fall of Man*

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state, and all men sinned in him, in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32).

8. *Salvation*

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:14-17; Isa. 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; John 15:10; Acts 20:21).

9. Grace and the New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; John 3:8; John 6:44; Titus 2:11-14).

10. Justification

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood (Rom. 3:20-26; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

11. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner: first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return (Heb. 10:10-14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Rev. 22:11).

12. The Security of the Saints

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1).

13. The Church

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in

them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the church which is the body of Christ; that the church is formed by the Holy Spirit's baptizing work that began at Pentecost; that each believer has the solemn responsibility to study the Scriptures for himself and then obey its truth as one who must individually give account; and that each believer as a priest may go directly to God for praise, confession of sin and petitions for his constant needs (1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 15:13-18; Acts 1:5; Rom. 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:9, 10; Heb. 4:14-16; Rev. 1:6; 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 28:19, 20; Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 15:26).

14. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that all born-again believers walking in obedience shall be invited to participate in the communion service (Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 42).

15. Separation

We believe that God calls all Christians to live a holy life in absolute devotion to Himself; that our Savior best exemplified this required lifestyle when He ministered compassionately in and to the world but was entirely separate from the world's sinful attitudes, beliefs and practices; and that we must follow His commands not to unite with unbelievers, to separate from disobedient believers and those who teach doctrinal error, to expose sin and to earnestly contend for the faith. We believe that personal or church unions that hinder us from fully obeying and teaching the Scriptures are wrong (Matt. 10:34-39; 18:15-17; 28:17-20; Acts 5:29; 20:20, 26, 27; Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 Cor. 5:7-13; 11:1; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1; Gal. 1:8, 9; Eph. 5:1-11; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15; 1

Tim. 6:3-6; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; Titus 3:10, 11; Heb. 7:26, 27; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Jude 3).

16. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of kings (Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19, 20; Dan. 3:17, 18).

17. Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37).

18. Rapture and Subsequent Events

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation.

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10; Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6).

19. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire (Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21; Rev. 20:14, 15).

20. Marriage and Family

We believe that God instituted marriage and designed it to be the union of one man and one woman for life. While both man and woman are equal in value and spiritual relationship to God, God appointed man as the loving head of his wife and made him

responsible for the education of their children. Under Christ's ultimate authority, the husband is to care for his family, the wife is to submit to the husband's leadership and the children are to obey their parents. We further believe that God created man and woman as sexual beings and that sexual expression is rightly limited to married partners for the purposes of procreation and the pleasure of one's spouse. We therefore believe that premarital, extramarital, homosexual, pornographic and self-gratifying sexual activities are sin, not just alternative lifestyles (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-6:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Gen. 1:27, 28; 1 Cor. 7:1-5; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 5:27-32; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Gen. 2:22-25; Mark 10:1-12; 1 Cor. 7:39).

CHURCH COVENANT *Revised 2015*

Our Church Covenant will be used as a basis for the conduct, duties and responsibilities of our members.

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith, having been immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the winning of a soul to Christ; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior; and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; and to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to seek it without delay.

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.