

ARTICLES OF FAITH

(Sections 21, 22, 23 Added and Approved by Vote of the Congregation on June 20, 1993)

“We also believe, and therefore speak.” II Cor. 4:13

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible, composed of Old and New Testaments, is verbally and plenary inspired of God, the complete and final written revelation of Himself and His Will, free from all error and from all omission as given in its original manuscripts; and is of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice (Deut. 4:2; Jer.15:16; Gal. 3:16; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19-21).

2. THE TRINITY

We believe in the one and only true and living God, an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, eternally existing in three persons, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being, perfect in Holiness, righteousness and justice, infinite in wisdom, power and mercy, unchanging in essence, attributes, consciousness, and will, to Whom we owe our highest love, reverence and obedience (Deut. 33:27; Isa. 48:16, 61:1; Matt. 3:16, 28:19; John 1:1; Heb. 9:14).

3. THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

A. The Person of Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ, eternally existent in the Trinity, was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman; and that He is both the Son of God, and the Son of Man (the God-Man). Fully God and Fully man in One Person (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; I Cor. 15:47; Gal. 4:4; I John 5:20).

B. The Work Of Jesus Christ

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious sacrifice for our sins; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the 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 only is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and all-sufficient Savior, the only mediator between God and man (Isa. 53:4-7, 11-12; Matt. 18:11; John 3:16, 10:18; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24-25; I Cor. 15:3, 20; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:8;

Phil. 2:7-8; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14, 7:25, 9:12-15, 12:2; I Pet. 2:24, 3:18; I John 2:2, 4:10).

4. PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a divine person; co-equal with God the Father and God the Son and is of the same nature, essence and being; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; 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, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We further hold that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) is the evidence of His indwelling rather than those temporary sign gifts such as speaking in tongues and other spectacular demonstrations (Gen. 1:1-3; Matt. 3:11, 28:19; Mark 1:8; Luke 1:35, 3:16, 24:49; John 1:33, 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 26, 15:26-27, 16:13, 8-11; Acts 5:30-32, 11:16; Rom.8:14, 16, 26-27; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 1:13-14, 5:18-21; II Thess. 2:7, 13; Heb. 9:15; I Pet. 1:2).

5. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

We Believe that Total Depravity does not mean Total Inability, rather that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27); but he sinned, and thereby incurred, not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; consequently all human beings are born with a sinful and depraved nature (Psa. 51:5; Jer. 17:9-10; Rom. 3:10-18, 23, 5:12).

6. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3) as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that He was raised from the dead for our justification, and all who believe on Him are justified on the single ground of His shed blood (Rom. 3:24,25, 4:1-4, 5:1; Heb. 9:11-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-21).

7. REDEMPTION

We believe that God's plan of redemption from all eternity is to save sinners from the bondage of sin and the penalty of the law (Gal. 1:4, 3:13, 4:5; Col. 1:13; Tim. 2:5-6; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19); to the intent that the redeemed might receive adoption to full sonship and be conformed to the image of His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord: that the redemption price of Christ's blood was paid once and for all; such that all have been set free from the slavery of sin and the curse of the law (2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 9:12, 10:10); and that "whosoever will" may walk out of the slave market of sin into life and liberty in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24, 8:1-2; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:13) by grace through faith in the divinity of His person, the efficacy of His blood, and in His bodily resurrection from the dead (John 1:1, 20:24-29; 1 Cor. 3:3-4; Heb. 9:12-14); and that the shed blood of Christ was uniquely sufficient to satisfy the just and holy demands of a Holy and Righteous God based on His Holy character and unchangeable nature, the blood of His Son the only price demanded, acceptable, and

accepted on behalf of and for the sinner (Isa. 53; Mat. 8:17; Mark 10:45; Acts 4: 12; Rom. 3:25-26, 5:9-10; 1 Cor. 3:15; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:7, 2:13, 5:1-2; Col. 1:14, 20:13; Heb. 9: 11-15, 22, 25-28, 10:4-6, 12-18; 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 2:24; John 3: 16), the saved sinner now awaiting the redemption of his body, to be presented “holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight.”

8. EVERLASTING LIFE

That all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23) and thereby become the children of God (John 1:12, 13; Rom. 8:16), and are the recipients of everlasting life (1 Pet. 1:3-5), which cannot be taken away or lost (John 3:16; 10:28-29).

9. RESURRECTION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord (Acts 2:32), in His ascension into Heaven (Acts 1:9,10) and in His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for the saved (Heb. 4:14; 1 John 2:1,2), His resurrection being the firstfruits of our own resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

10. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

We believe in the imminent, Pretribulational, RAPTURE (Blessed Hope) of the saved to meet the LORD in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18), “and so shall we ever be with the Lord”.

11. SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal, visible, glorious, and Premillennial SECOND COMING of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:11-16), to set up His Millennial Kingdom on the earth, after which will follow the Great White Throne Judgment, after which He will reign forever (Rev. 20, 21).

12. ESCHATOLOGY

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just to everlasting blessedness, (1 Thess. 4:16; Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 20:4-6) and the bodily resurrection of the unjust to everlasting, conscious punishment (Rev. 14:9-12, 20:11-13, 21:8).

13. SATAN

That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan is a real person who deceives the whole world (Job 1:6-7; 1 Peter 5:8). He will be chained and cast into the bottomless pit during the millennial reign and loosed for a little season, just before the White Throne Judgment, then cast into the lake of fire eternally (Rev. 20:1-10).

14. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

That all Christians are called into a life of separation to the Lord and to His joyous service and from all worldly and sinful practices (II Cor. 6:17, 18, 7:1; I Thess. 1:9-10; I John 2:15,16).

15. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

It is the duty of every Christian man and woman, and the duty of every church of Christ to seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life. It is also expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods sanctioned by the gospel of Christ (Matt. 10:5-15, 13:1-23, 22:8-10, 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16, 16:19-20; Luke 24:46-53; Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-4, 21:39, 8:1-40, 10:42-48, 13:1-3, 30-33; II Cor. 5:19-21).

16. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The act is a symbol of our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. The members of the church commemorate the Lord's death 'til He comes again by the use of bread and fruit of the vine (Matt. 3:13-17, 26:26-27, 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 22:19, 30; John 3:22-23; Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 10:16-17, 11:23-26).

17. THE LORD'S DAY

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private; and resting from secular employments, works of necessity and mercy only excepted (Matt. 28: 1-6; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Rev.1:9-11).

18. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in His sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under condemnation. This distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgment when final and everlasting awards are made to all men. (Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 9:48; Luke 23:43; John 3:36; Rom. 9:22-24; I Cor. 15:45-53; II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:10-15).

19. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to, or not contained in His Word. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to the church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The Gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power (Matt. 2:17-21; Mark 12: 13-17; Romans 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-4; I Peter 2:17).

20. SOCIAL SERVICE

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ first place in his own life and in human society; to oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice; to provide for the orphaned, the aged, helpless, and the sick; to help the aged and destitute widows, who have no relatives, who are widows indeed according to the scriptures (I Tim. 5:3-16); to seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love; always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. All means and methods used in social service for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus (Ex. 20:16, 22:9-15; Lev. 6:1-5; Deut. 4:41-42, 15:1-2, 27:17; Ezek. 18:5-9; Zech. 8:16-17; Luke 10:25-27, 6:27-36; Rom. 12:14-21; Col. 3:12-17; James 2:8).

21. HUMAN SEXUALITY & GENDER

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Furthermore, we believe the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated by Scripture (Gen 2:18-25) We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography and any such like are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex and must not be engaged in or practiced by members of the New Testament Church (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27) Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Sheets Memorial Baptist Church/School as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Sheets Memorial Baptist Church/School members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Sheets Memorial

Baptist Church/School, in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on sexuality and gender (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Sheets Memorial Baptist Church/School.

22. ABORTION & SANCTITY OF LIFE

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; 33:4; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44). All human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life's worth is too great to calculate in all its dimensions, not only pre-born babies, but the aged, the physically and or mentally challenged and every other stage of life or condition from conception through natural death. Therefore, we are called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Psalm 139)

23. LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).

24. CHRISTIAN GIVING

We believe that every Christian as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph 4:28; I Tim 5:17-18; I John 3:17).