

ARTICLES OF FAITH WITH CHANGES HIGHLIGHTED FOR CHURCH¹

ARTICLE III: ARTICLES OF FAITH

3.1 STATEMENT OF FINAL AUTHORITY

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. Members have the responsibility and opportunity to engage the elders and church staff on areas of theological disagreement. However, membership carries with it the implicit understanding that the elders have the final interpretive authority on Biblical meaning and application for the purposes of North Florida Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, bylaws, and discipline.

3.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

- I. **The Scriptures** - We believe the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired. We believe the Holy Bible has truth without any admixture of error for its matter and shall remain to the end of the age the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man. We believe the Holy Bible to be the true center of the Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.
 - i. By - The Holy Bible - we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which as originally written is the very Word of God.
 - ii. By - inspiration - we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Psa. 119:105, 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Psa. 119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; Rom. 3:4; I Peter 1:23; Rev. 22:19; John 12:48; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psa. 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39

- II. **The True God** - We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. We believe that in the unity of the Godhead,

¹ The original articles of faith did not have any Scripture references. All of these have been added.

there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Ex. 20:2-3; Gen 17:1; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; Psa. 83:18; Psa. 90:2; Jer. 10:10; Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim 1:17; Rom. 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4-6; I John 5:7; John 10:30; John 17:5; I Cor. 2:10-11; Phil 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

- III. **The Holy Spirit** - We believe the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature. We believe the Holy Spirit was active in creation and that in His relation to the unbelieving world, He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled. We believe the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness, and that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony. We believe the Holy Spirit is the agent in the New Birth in that He seals, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; II Thess. 2:7; John 16:8-11; John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:16; II Thess. 2:13; I Peter 1:2; Rom. 8:26-27

- IV. **The Devil, or Satan** - We believe Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors but through pride and ambition to be like the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels. We believe Satan is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world. We believe Satan to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy, the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness. We believe Satan is destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17; Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; Eph. 2:2; John 14:30; I Thess. 3:5; Matt. 4:1-3; I Peter 5:8; I John 3:8; Matt. 13:39; Luke 22:3-4; Rev. 12:10; II Cor. 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22; I John 4:3; II John 7; I John 2:22; Rev. 13:13-14; II Thess. 2:8-11; Rev. 19:11,16, 20; Rev. 12:7-9; Rev. 20:1-3, 10; Matt. 25:41.

- V. **Creation** - We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively. We believe man was created directly in God's own image and that man's creation was not a matter of evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms. We believe that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law is that they should bring forth only after their kind.

Gen. 1:1; Ex 20:11; Acts 4:24; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jer. 10:12; Neh. 9:6; Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:21-23; Gen. 1:11; Gen. 1:24

- VI. The Fall of Man** - We believe man was created in innocence under the law of his maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and are therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:12, 19; Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1, 3; Rom. 1:18; Ezek.18:19-20; Rom. 1:20, 28, 32; Gal. 3:22

- VII. The Virgin Birth** - We believe Jesus Christ was miraculously begotten of the Holy Ghost and was born of a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of a woman. We believe Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and God, the Son.

Gen 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Psa. 2:7; Gal. 4:4; I John 5:20; I Cor. 15:47

- VIII. The Atonement of Sin** - We believe the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins. We believe His atonement 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. We believe Jesus Christ, having risen from the dead, is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. We believe Jesus Christ is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 2:24; I Pet. 3:18; Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2; I Cor. 15:20; Isa. 53:12; Heb. 9:12-15; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:2

- IX. Grace in the New Creation** - We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again and that through the new birth, an individual becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus. We believe the new birth is a process but is instantaneous in which one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. We believe the new creation is brought about in a manner above comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor the will of man, but wholly and solely the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. We believe proper evidence of the new creation appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

John 3:3; II Cor. 5:17; Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41; II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13; John 1:12-13; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9

- X. **The Freeness of Salvation** - We believe that by God's grace the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel and that it is the immediate duty of all to accept salvation by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith. We believe nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

I Thess. 1:4; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:29-30; Matt. 11:28; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13; John 6:37; Isa. 55:6; Acts 2:38; Isa. 55:7; John 3:15-16; I Tim. 1:15; I Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:4-5; John 5:40; John 3:18; John 3:36

- XI. **Justification** - We believe the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe Him is Justification, which includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness. We believe justification is bestowed not in consideration of any works or righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, whereby His righteousness is imputed unto us.

Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11, Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 5:1, 9; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4; Gal. 3:11; Rom. 4:1-8; Heb. 10:38

- XII. **Repentance and Faith** - We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening spirit of God. Being deeply convicted of guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we believe all mankind must turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy, at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4; Psalms 51:7; Isa. 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9-11; Rom. 15:7

- XIII. **The Church** - We believe the Baptist Church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising His gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. We believe the officers are **elders (pastors)**² and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is to make individual disciples, to build up the church, and to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government; free from the interference of any hierarchy of

² The original statement read: "We believe the officers are pastors and deacons..."

individuals or organizations; and the only true superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit. We believe it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel and that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. On all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4, 8-11; Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:1-13; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 15:22, Jude 3, 4; II Cor. 8:23-24, I Cor. 16:1; Mal. 3:10; Lev. 27:32; I Cor. 16:2; I Cor. 6:1-3, I Cor. 5:11-13

- XIV. **Baptism and the Lord's Supper** - We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42). We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes; and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We also believe that, whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).³

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Rom. 6:4-5; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 11:23-28

- XV. **The Perseverance of the Saints** - We believe real believers endure to the end and that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes them from superficial professors. We believe God⁴ watches over each believer's welfare; and that he/she is kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

John 8:31-32; Col. 1:21-23; I John 2:19; Matt. 13:19-21; Rom. 8:28; Psa. 121:3; Heb. 1:14; I Peter. 1:5; Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-39

- XVI. **The Righteous and the Wicked** - We believe there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. We believe only those justified by faith in the

³ The original statement read: "We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. We believe baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by sacred use of bread and fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination. "

⁴ The original statement read: "We believe a special Providence watches over..."

name of the Lord Jesus, 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. We believe 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.

Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18;23; Rom. 6:17-18; Prov. 11:31; I Peter 1:18; Rom.1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29; Rom. 6:16; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rom.7:6; Rom. 6:23; Prov.14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt.25:34,41; John 8:21, Luke 9:26; John 12:25, Matt.7:13-14

XVII. Civil Government - We believe civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society. We believe magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed in all things except those opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21 -22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:1-14; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 23:10; Phil. 2:10-11; Psalms 72:11, I Peter 2:17

XVIII. The Resurrection and Return of Christ and Related Events - We believe and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily on the third day and that He alone is our merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. We believe Jesus Christ will return someday for the living saints along with those dead in Christ - bodily, personally, and visibly. We believe the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David and Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet.

Matt. 28:6-7; Acts 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-7; Acts 1:9, 11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 12:2; Heb. 8:6; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9-10; John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16; Matt.24:27, 42; Heb. 9:28; I Cor. 15:42-44, 51-53; I Thess. 4:17; Phil. 3:20-21; Luke 1:32; I Cor. 15:25; Isa. 11:4-5; Psalms 72:8, Rev. 20:1-4; Rev. 20:6

XIX. Missions - We believe the command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches.

Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15

XX. The Grace of Giving - We believe Scriptural giving is a spiritual discipline that every believer should participate in, and should be done with glad and generous hearts, in love as an act of worship.⁵

2 Corinthians 8:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Hebrews 7:2,4; Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10; Acts 4:34,35,37

⁵ The original statement was: "We believe Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith. We believe all Christians are commanded to bring all their tithes and offerings to the common treasury of the church upon the first day of the week."