First Baptist Church Strongsville, Ohio

Statement of Faith

October 2024

<u>ARTICLE IV</u> - Statement of Faith
The Statement of Faith of this local church shall always be in agreement with the revealed Word of God.

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 plenarily 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 supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed, and opinions shall be tried. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

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; 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. Exodus 20:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11

The Father
We believe God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity and the source of all that God is and does; that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace as Ruler of the Universe. He demonstrates headship in the Godhead as the Son and Spirit both submissively carry out acts of obedience to the Father while always remaining one with Him. He is the Creator of all but He is spiritual Father only to believers as He adopts all those who come to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. In His sovereignty He neither authors nor approves of sin. Genesis 1:31; Psalm 103:19, 145:9; John 16:3, 17:4; Romans 8:14, 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5

The Son
We believe that the Son of God is the second Person of the Trinity and that everything was created through Him. He was incarnated in the human race as Jesus Christ, conceived in a virgin by the Holy Spirit. He lived a sinless life, was crucified as the Lamb of God to provide atonement of infinite value, died and was buried. On the third day, Jesus was raised from death in His same body in glorified form, was seen alive by hundreds of witnesses, and ascended to Heaven to be enthroned there to intercede for His people until His return to earth. All of this was in fulfillment of ancient prophecy. The death of Christ, the Just One for the unjust ones, fully satisfied the offended holiness of God, so that all who entrust their eternal welfare to Jesus Christ as their Advocate and Savior will be saved eternally. Isaiah 53; Matthew 1:22-24, 28:5; John 1:14, 10: 28; Acts 2:24; Romans 4:25, 8:30, 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 10:12-14, 13:5; 1 Peter 3:18

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 relation 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 that the sign/revelatory gifts

of the Holy Spirit have fulfilled their purpose and are not applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit today. Genesis 1:1-3; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:8; Luke 1:35, 24:49; John 1:33, 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 14:26, 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32, 11:16; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 12:28-30, 13:8-10, 14:1-40; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 1:13-14; Hebrews 2:2-4; Hebrews 9:14

The Devil, or Satan

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and 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. Matthew 4:1-11;
2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10

Creation

Overview

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and humanity; 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 Adam and Eve were created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3

Gender

We believe that our Creator established human gender biologically in fixed, binary categories: male and female. Seeking to confuse or change the God-given distinction of the two genders violates God's creative design and revealed will. Genesis 1:26-28, 5:2; Matthew 19:4-6

Marriage, Sex and the Value of Human Life

In light of God's creative design, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bonds of a Biblically defined marriage. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is Biblically immoral and outside of God's gracious will. For the believer, marriage is to be in the Lord and only to another believer. God's order of authority in the Christian family is Christ is the Head, followed by the husband, then the wife and finally the children. Children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus, human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18, 24, 25; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:24-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 7:1-5; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:4; Hebrews 13:4; Psalm 127, 128, 129, 139:13:16

Divorce

We believe that any marriage is to last a lifetime and that death breaks the marriage bond. Divorce or annulment of a marriage is contrary to the divine will of God. At the same time, God's word recognizes the hardness of the human heart and allows for divorce in specific instances. Those instances include: when a spouse deserts the relationship, commits adultery or is dangerously abusive. In instances between sinning spouses, forgiveness and reconciliation is preferable to separation or divorce even where adultery has occurred. Hosea 2:14-24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:21-35; 19:8-9, 60; 1 Corinthians 7:11

The Fall of Mankind
We believe that mankind 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 human beings sinned in him, in consequence of which all human beings 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. Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 1:18, 32; 3:10-19; 5:12, 19

The Virgin Birth
We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other person was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14

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; Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 2:14-17; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24

Resurrection and Priesthood of Christ
We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us. Matthew 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6, 51; Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 2:17; 5:9, 10

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 the 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 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8

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 work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood. Romans 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9

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. Hebrews 10:10-14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:25–27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Revelation 22:11

The Security of the Saints
We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 1

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 privilege invested in them by His Word. We believe the true mission of the church is to enjoy God and make the name of Jesus famous for all the right reasons. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and 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 hold that the Biblical offices the Lord established to lead and serve the church are Elders (also referred to as overseers, and pastors in the New Testament) and Deacons. These are to be godly men whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. Elders primarily lead the church. Deacons primarily assist the Elders and serve the church. Elders may be paid or unpaid. Deacons are not paid. Other offices, though not Biblically specified, may be added based on wisdom, best practice or requirements for the function of a local church as a recognized institution. The church shall not add offices that stand against scripture. 1 Corinthians 11:2; Acts 2:41, 42; 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 4:19-20

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13-18

Baptism and the Lord's Supper
We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show 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 for believers as it is the commemoration of His death until He comes and that it should always be preceded by self-examination. Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42

Separation
We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11

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. Romans 13:1-7; 2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19-20; Daniel 3:17, 18

The Final Events
We believe that God's agenda for the world will complete His promised dealings with the Jewish chosen nation and involve the entire world. No one can know or calculate the starting point of the final events mentioned in the Bible.

In broad outline, we believe that God's agenda will realize the following events:

1. The Rapture - The taking up to Heaven of the Church, comprising all true believers regardless of denomination. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17
2. The Tribulation - A period of about seven years when judgment is poured out on unbelieving Jews and Gentiles on earth. Revelation 6-19, Daniel 9:27
3. The Judgment Seat - Meanwhile, the Church in Heaven will face the judgment seat of Christ and enjoy the marriage feast of the Lamb. Revelation 19, 2 Corinthians 5:10
4. The Second Coming - Jesus Christ will return to earth with His hosts of angels and believers to interrupt the Battle of Armageddon by conquering both sides and establishing His promised Messianic Kingdom, which will last 1000 years, with Satan bound and unable to influence earthly life. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, Revelation 20
5. The Final Judgment - After a brief release and uprising, Satan and his demonic hordes will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. Unbelievers who rebelled with Satan, and other resurrected unsaved persons, will face the Great White Throne judgment and be consigned to Hell for eternity. Revelation 20
6. The New Creation - God will create a new heavens and a new earth for His people where they will live joyfully in His presence forever. Revelation 21-22

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 all

people both in and after death, in the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire. Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Romans 7:6; 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34-41; John 8:21; Revelation 20:14, 15.

In all these things we believe that our church should minister in a gracious, forgiving and Christ-like spirit and seek to bring the non-believer into a right relationship with God and to restore the believer to fellowship. Galatians 6:1-3; Isaiah 54:1-10