

Articles of Faith

We understand that the following articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do believe that in so far as these articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in Scriptures, and therefore binding upon us as born-again believers.

I. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, the sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation, is the very Word of God; that it was written by men controlled by the Holy Spirit, so that they were directed as to the very words of the Bible; and therefore, it is and shall remain until the end of the age the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; that it is basic to Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21)

II. The Triune God

We believe in the one triune God: who is personal, spirit, and sovereign (Mark 12:29; John 4:24; 14:9; Psalm 135:6), perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power (Psalm 18:30; 145:5, Deuteronomy 33:27); absolutely separate and above the world as its creator; yet everywhere present in the world as the upholder of all things (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 104); self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:26; Matthew 28:1-9; II Corinthians 13:14), each of whom is to be honored and worshipped equally as true God (John 5:23; Acts 5:3-4).

III. The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Second Person in the Triune God, the eternal Word, Creator, Sustainer of all things, and the only-begotten Son, our great God and Savior (John 1:1-3; 3:16; Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5; Galatians 1:16); that without any essential change in His divine person (Hebrews 13:8), He became man by the miracle of virgin birth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:23), thus to continue forever as both true God and man, one person with two natures (Colossians 2:9; Revelation 22:16); that as man, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15; John 8:46); that as the perfect Lamb of God, He gave Himself in death upon the cross, bearing there the sin of the world and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead (Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 20:28; Galatians 3:13; John 1:29); that He rose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died (Luke 24:34, 36; Romans 10:9-10; John 20:25-28); that as our great high priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our advocate and our intercessor (Hebrews 4:14; 9:24; I John 2:1).

IV. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person of the triune God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4) and active in creation, revelation and redemption (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; I Corinthians 2:10; II Corinthians 3:18); that He convicts the world of sin (John 3:5), indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, and sanctifies all who become children of God through Christ (I Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; 6:11; Ephesians 4:30; 3:16; Romans 8:14, John 14:26).

V. The Creation of the Universe

We believe that our orderly universe and everything in it came into being by divine creation and not by a natural process such as evolution; that creation was a unique event in history, fully completed at the end of the six days and that since the Bible plainly teaches the permanent

distinctiveness of the created kinds of life, we reject all forms of evolution. We do accept change in living things in the sense of mutations (changes) but we do not believe that trans-mutations (from one kind into another kind) do occur. We accept the Genesis record of the creation as a historically and scientifically accurate account (Genesis 1 & 2; Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 33:6-9).

VI. The Creation and Fall of Man

We believe that man was the direct creation of God: spirit, soul, and body and not in any sense the product of animal ancestry but made in the divine image (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7; 18:24; Matthew 19:4; I Thessalonians 5:23); that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature and the progenitor of a fallen race (Genesis 3:1-24; 5:3); which is universally sinful in both nature and practice (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12); that man is alienated from the life and family of God (Ephesians 4:18; John 8:42-44); subject to the power of the devil and the flesh (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 8:7-8); under the righteous judgment and wrath of God (Romans 3:19; 1:18); and has within himself no possible means of recover or salvation (Mark 7:21-23; Matthew 19:26; Romans 7:18); that therefore, man cannot see nor enter the kingdom of God until he is born again by the Holy Spirit; that no degree of reformation, however great, no humanitarian and philanthropical schemes, however useful, no baptism or other ordinance, however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven.

VII. Redemption

We believe in the redemptive work of Christ. We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became the sinner's substitute before God, and died as a propitiator sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Nothing can add in the very least to the value of the precious blood of Christ or to the merit of that finished work wrought for us by Him who tasted death for every man (Isaiah 53:1-6; John 1:29; Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:24-26; 5:6; I Corinthians 15:1-3; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19; 2:24).

VIII. Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace: that salvation is the free gift of God (Romans 3:24; 6:23); neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:4, 5); that the only condition for receiving salvation is faith and repentance, which are inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God. By faith, we mean a heartfelt conviction and confidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and that He rose again. By repentance we mean a change of mind concerning sin and God. Repentance toward sin involves a deep conviction of one's guilt, danger, helplessness, and also that sin is entirely without profit. Repentance toward God involves a change of mind concerning His goodness and love that results in our surrender to Him, His word and His will (Acts 16:31; John 3:16; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 20:21). We believe that the evidence of this faith and repentance is a heart-felt reception of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Revelation 3:20); and an open confession that we belong to Him (Romans 10:9; Matthew 10:32).

We believe that in Jesus Christ all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life (I John 5:13); and perfect righteousness (Romans 3:22); sonship in the family of God (John 1:12); deliverance and security from all condemnation (John 5:24); every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness (Ephesians 1:3; II Peter 1:3); and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (John 10:27-30; Romans 8:25-29; Philippians 1:6; I Peter 1:5); that such only are real believers as continue in Christ's words (John 8:31); this perseverance in attachment to Christ

being the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial believers.

IX. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting apart unto God, is threefold. It is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace" and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe also that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state, as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ, when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like him" (John 17:17; II Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; 5:25-27; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10; 12:10).

X. The Christian's Walk

We believe that we are called with a Holy Calling to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthy pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord (Romans 6:11-13; 8:2, 4, 12; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:22-24; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 1:4, 7; 3:5-9).

XI. Good Works

We believe in righteous living and good works, not as the procuring cause of salvation in any sense, but as the proper evidence and fruit of salvation (I John 3:9-11); and therefore as Christians we should keep the word of our Lord (John 14:23); seek the things which are above (Colossians 3:1); walk as He walked (I John 2:6); be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8); and especially, accept as our solemn responsibility--the duty and privilege of bearing the gospel to a lost world in order that we may bear much fruit (Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:19; John 15:16); remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have learned that they are not under law, but under grace.

XII. The Security of the Believer

We believe that because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritorious on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenant of God, and because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved, shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that since He cannot look upon the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chastise them and correct them in infinite love. But having undertaken to save them and to keep them forever apart from all human merit, He who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory, and conformed to the image of His Son (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 1:24-25).

XIII. Assurance

We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all, who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day that they take Him to be their Savior; and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discover of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written word, exciting within His children filial-love, gratitude and obedience (Luke 10:20; 22:32; II Corinthians 5:1, 6-8; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 10:22; I John 5:13).

XIV. The Great Commission

We believe that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved, that they are sent forth by Him into the world even as He was sent forth of His Father into the world. We believe that after they are saved, they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers, pilgrims, ambassadors, and witnesses, and that their primary purpose in this life should be to make Christ known to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:18-20; I Peter 1:17; 2:11).

XV. Christian Service

We believe that divine, enabling gifts for the service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit and each is called to his own divinely appointed service, as the Spirit may will. In the Apostolic Church, there were certain gifted men, apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers, who were called by and separated unto God for the perfecting of the Saints unto the work of the ministry. We believe also that today some men are especially called of God to be evangelists, pastors and teachers, and that is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God (Romans 12:6; I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11). We believe that in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God we should present ourselves wholly to Him for His service (Romans 12:1-2).

XVI. Separation

We believe that separation from apostasy is important and in obedience to God, and that it shall be held not only as a doctrine but practiced at home and also abroad by the missionaries or mission organizations which we support. We believe that a local church ought to be identified only with such associations of churches as require that the individual churches and their pastors practice separation from apostasy and worldliness. We repudiate the principle of cooperation in evangelism or other spiritual endeavors with those who are apostate in doctrine. We believe that great carefulness should be exercised in fellowshiping or cooperating with churches or other religious organizations which might tend to undermine the doctrine of standards of living taught by this church. We believe that it is unscriptural to unite a believer and a non-believer in marriage (II Corinthians 6:14-18; II John 9:10).

XVII. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is ordained by God for the punishment of evil doers and for the protection of the good (Romans 13:1-7). We therefore consider it our duty to pray for rulers and magistrates (I Timothy 2:1-3) and to be submissive and obedient to their authority, except in things opposed to the will of God (Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Matthew 23:10). Believers, as the salt of the earth and as lights in the world, are obligated as much as possible by any lawful and scriptural means (including voting their convictions and possibly even running for

elected offices) to influence the moral standards of the society in which they live. They must, however, refrain from seeking or accepting financial support from the Government for the propagation of their faith and from seeking to use the powers of a secular government in an attempt to impose their religious faith upon others. We strongly affirm our agreement with the First Amendment of the US Constitution that states, "*Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*"

XVIII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that the only Ordinances of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian Baptism is the believer's immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and also to show our desire to be dead to the old life of sin and alive unto God and righteousness; that in scriptural order, Baptism precedes the privilege of church membership and is the public recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:16; 28:19-20; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41-42). The Lord's Supper is a memorial service in which the elements of the bread and fruit of the vine remind us of the love of God in Christ Jesus "who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; that this ordinance is to be observed in anticipation of His coming and preceded always by self-examination (I Corinthians 11:23-28; Romans 8:32; Matthew 25:26-30).

XIX. The Church

We believe that a local church of Christ is a congregation of immersed believers associated by a covenant of faith and the 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 scripturally, designated officers are Pastor (elders) and deacons, whose qualification, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is found in the great commission: First, to make individual disciples by preaching the gospel; Second, to baptize them; Third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to fellowship and cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; and in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the local church is final (Acts 2:41, 42; Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:4, 8-11; Acts 14:23; 6:5-6; 15:23; 20:17-28; Matthew 28:19-20; I Timothy 3:1-13).

XX. Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan who was originally created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and unlawful ambition rebelled against God (Ezekiel 28:13-17; Isaiah 14:13-14; I Timothy 3:7), thus becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44); the great adversary of God and His people (Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:10); leader of all other evil angels and spirits (Matthew 12:22-28; 25:41); the deceiver and god of this present world (Revelation 2:9; II Corinthians 4:4); that his powers are supernaturally great, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God, who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Book of Job; Luke 22:31-32); and that he was defeated and judged at the cross and therefore his final doom is certain (John 12:31-32; 16:11; Revelation 20:10); and that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the blood of the Lamb (Ephesians 6:12-18; Revelation 12:11).

XXI. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe in the Second Coming of Christ; that His return from heaven will be pre-millennial, personal, physical, visible and glorious--a blessed hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed but always imminent (Acts 1:11, Revelation 1:7; Mark 12:33-37; Titus 2:11-13; Revelation 22:20); that when He comes He will first by resurrection and translation remove from the earth His waiting Church (I Thessalonians 4:16-18), then pour out the righteous judgments of God upon the unbelieving world (Revelation 6:8-17), afterwards descend with His church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years (Revelation 19:1-20:6; Matthew 13:41-43); at the close of which He will raise and judge the unsaved dead (Revelation 20:11-15); and finally as the Son of David deliver up His Messianic Kingdom to God the Father (I Corinthians 15:24--28); in order that as the Eternal Son He may reign forever with the Father in the new heaven and the new earth (Luke 1:32-33; Revelation 21:1-22:6).

XXII. Life After Death

We believe in future life, bodily resurrection and eternal judgment; that the spirits of the redeemed at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Philippians 1:21-23; II Corinthians 5:8); where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21; I Corinthians 15:35-58; I John 3:2); at which time their works shall be brought before the judgment seat of Christ – a judgment which may issue in rewards or the loss of rewards, or rebuke, but not the loss of the soul (I Corinthians 3:8-15; II Corinthians 5:10; Colossians 3:24-25); that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment (Luke 16:19-31; II Peter 2:9); at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave and they shall be judged according to their works and cast into hell, the place of final and everlasting punishment (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8; Mark 9:43-48; Jude 1:13).

XXIII. Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, for life, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). Marriage ceremonies are Christian worship services recognizing this uniting of one man and one woman. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (I Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage relationship between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, bigamy, domestic partnerships, polygamy, transgenderism, incest, pedophilia, and pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10). We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Greendale Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of Greendale Baptist Church as well as to the communities they serve/represent, it is imperative that all persons employed by Greendale Baptist Church, regardless of capacity, agree to and abide by this

statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; I Thessalonians 5:22). We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin while seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11). We believe that every person must be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity with the express attitude of loving sinners, but hating sin (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31).

XXIV. Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life begins as conception and ends at a time appointed by God (Hebrews 9:27). Human life at all stages (pre-born through advanced), regardless of one's quality of life, is of inestimable worth in scope and impact (Psalm 139). We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value human life at all stages of its progression.

XXV. Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The articles of faith do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired 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 (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16).