

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH—Faith Baptist Church; Sauk Centre, MN**

***“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” Amos 3:3***

### **I. The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Scriptures consists of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that the original manuscripts were both verbally (1 Cor. 2:13) and plenary (John 10:35) inspired of God and that He has preserved His Word (Mat. 5:18) as authoritative, inerrant, and infallible. We reject the books of the Apocrypha as part of Sacred Scripture. We also believe that the Bible alone is our authority for faith and practice and reject the “traditions of men” which seek to “make the Word of God of no effect” (Mark 7:6-13).

### **II. The One True God**

We believe there is one and only one living and true God (Deut. 6:4), an infinite Spirit (John 4:24), the Maker and supreme Ruler of the Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all 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. We believe that honor or devotion which is given to any other person or thing which is due to God alone is idolatry. We pray to God directly through our Savior and not through the Virgin Mary or any other person, be they living or dead (Ex. 20:2-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11).

### **III. The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is God. He was pre-existent and eternal before the incarnation. He is the Son of God, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 22:11-15; Ex. 3:2-6; Josh. 5:13-15; Jn 1:1-5; 8:58; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:13-17). We believe that Jesus was virgin born and was fully God and fully man. Jesus was God in the flesh. We believe that Christ died voluntarily on the cross, suffering in full and paying in full for our sins and penalty with His own shed blood, substituting Himself for the sinner, and that He was buried and rose again. This offering of Christ as a sacrifice was once for all and never to be repeated (Heb. 7:27; 10:1-18). We also believe that Christ fulfilled His prophetic office and the law in His first coming, that He was and is our faithful High Priest, and that He will rule on David’s throne in the Millennial Kingdom.

#### **IV. 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 Satan until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the one who opens the heart for the soul to believe; that He is the Agent in the new birth; and that He indwells, baptizes, and seals the believer upon regeneration once for all. He then continues to guide, teach, help, fill, and sanctify the believer after conversion as the Christian is yielded to Him (John 14:16; Mat. 28:19-20; 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; Romans 8). We also believe that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to men, but that some of these gifts were sign-gifts used to authenticate only the early apostolic claim of the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ. These "signs and wonders" were done for the benefit of the unbelievers at that time. We believe that the Biblical gift of tongues was an ability to speak a foreign language not otherwise known and that the Bible knows no ecstatic utterances claimed by those who exercise a "prayer language." This Biblical gift ended by the latter time of the completion of the New Testament. We would reckon all modern utterances, as the church has done since the first century, as either demonism or emotionalism (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 13:8; 14; Heb. 2:1-4). We believe the Holy Spirit is the only Vicar of Christ on earth and that no man can claim this place (John 14:26; 15:26). We also believe that we have a completed revelation in God's written word and that this revelation ended with the completion of the New Testament (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19).

#### **V. Angels**

We believe in the Biblical teaching of angels. Angels were created by God before the creation of the world in a state of holiness. Angels are incorporeal, spirit beings, which have personality, a nature, and super-human abilities. The numbers of angels are innumerable, and they are organized to serve God (Cherubim, Seraphim, Archangels, etc). Some of their activities are communicating messages, assisting in governmental functions, praising God, ministering to believers, and rejoicing over the conversion of sinners (Job 38:6-7; Luke 2:13; Eph. 3:10; Col. 2:10; Heb. 1:14; 12:22). 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 the 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. There are evil angels under his leadership who were cast out of heaven with him. They are the demons that oppose God and His will at the bidding of Satan (Is. 14; Ez. 28; Mat. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10; Mt. 4:24; Eph. 6:12).

## **VI. The Creation and Fall of Man**

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; that the creation account of days are literal 24-hour days; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, the first parents of the entire human race (Gen. 1,2; Col. 1:16-17; John 1:3).

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). Our sins are what condemns us. Jesus Christ came not to condemn but to save (John 3:15-18). We believe that the Biblical rights, worth, and dignity of every individual are a gift to each from the Creator, and that government is instituted to secure, protect, and defend these God-given rights. We affirm that life is a gift from God and that life begins at conception. Abortion and euthanasia (such as the so called "death with dignity" idea) are a denial of these rights. We believe that the traditional family unit is the foundation of society. Deviations from the heterosexual beauty of the marriage bond is both sin and an abomination. This would include all deviations such as homosexuality, lesbianism, fornication, and adultery (Ps. 51; 139; Rom. 13:4; Lev. 18:19-23; 20:10-16; Romans 1:26-2:1; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

## **VII. Sin**

We believe in sin as defined by the Scriptures as any transgression of any law of God, as anything contrary to the character of God, as any willful acts of committing sin, or as omitting the good things God wants us to do (1 Sam. 12:23; Gal. 3:10; Jas. 4:17; 1 Jn. 3:4). All men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, guilty before God. We believe that the Law was to show man his sinfulness and his incapability of pleasing God. The penalty for sin is death (spiritual, physical, and eternal). We believe that the only exception to the sinfulness of men was that Jesus Christ was without a sinful nature and that he was a perfect God-man (Rom. 3:10-23; 5:12; John 3:16; Rom. 6:23).

## **VIII. Salvation**

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God offered to sinful men. This gift cannot be earned or deserved but comes only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ,

who alone was able to provide the payment for the penalty of sin. A sinner is born into God's family when he repents (changes his mind) of his sin, seeing it as God sees it, believes from his heart that Christ died for his sins, the just for the unjust, (He became our substitute) and trusts in the completed sacrifice of Christ on the cross. By Christ's shed blood, He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin. He must also believe that Christ rose again from the dead in victory over sin and the grave. The believer then becomes righteous in the eyes of God, the penalty of sin is removed, and eternal life has begun. We believe that the new birth is instantaneous and not a process; that at this time the believer is made a partaker of the divine nature; and that this new creation is brought about solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth. We believe that Jesus is enthroned in Heaven and in His wonderful person He is the qualified, compassionate, all-sufficient mediator between God and man. We believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was honored among women, but that she too needed a Savior for her sins (Mat. 1:47; Acts 4:12). We believe that the believer is to adore and worship only God and that we pray to and approach the Father only through His Son Jesus Christ. We further believe that no child of God should ever pray to or give any devotion to any created being (Mary, angels, dead or living saints, etc). Once the believer has been born into God's family through the new birth, we believe that he is sealed unto the day of redemption; that he is now considered a saint before God; that he begins a continuous process whereby the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to his life to conform him to the image of God's Son; that this process will be fully accomplished at death or at the Lord's return when the believer will be glorified; and that he is eternally saved and can never lose that salvation. This true conversion will then evidence itself as good works because of love for our dear Savior. If the believer should become carnal, God will treat him as a son and will lovingly chastise him to bring him back into fellowship with Himself (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:1; John 10:28-30; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; John 3:36; Rom. 5:1; John 6:47; Heb. 12).

## **IX. The Church**

We believe that the local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its officers are pastor and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe that Christ gave two ordinances (commands) to His church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The only sacrament was Christ's one-time propitiatory sacrifice (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). We believe that the ordinance of 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. We believe that baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. In no way does baptism impart any kind of grace, spiritual life, or cleansing from sin. Baptism is to be by immersion only. We believe that the ordinance of

the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded by solemn self-examination. The Lord's Supper is a memorial, not a sacrifice. We believe that the participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers. We believe that the unleavened bread and the unfermented grape juice remain unchanged and that they are only symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood which took place at one time only in history. We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity and the carrying out the Great Commission. We hold that the church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of men, organizations, or governments; and that the one and only Head of the church is Christ. We believe that true churches may cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel and that each church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. We believe in the Biblical commands to separate from worldliness, religious apostasy, and ecumenical cooperations. We believe that on all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the church is final. We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the church which is the universal Body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 15:13-18; Acts 8:36-39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Mat. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42). We are Baptists by conviction because we believe that our historical Baptist distinctives are taught in Scripture:

**Bible**, the sole authority for faith & practice.

**Autonomy** of the local church

**Priesthood** of every believer

**Two offices** – Pastor & Deacons

**Individual soul liberty**

**Saved church membership**

**Two ordinances** – Baptism & Communion

**Separation** of church and state

## **X. Last Things**

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 coming of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ez. 37). We believe in the rapture of the saints, an event which can occur at any moment, and that

at the moment the dead in Christ will be raised in glorified bodies and the living in Christ will be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all believers shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of tribulation (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-54; Phil. 3:20; Rev. 3:10). We believe that the tribulation, which follows the rapture of the church, will be culminated by the premillennial revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom (Dan. 9:25-27; Mat. 24:20-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Rev. 20:1-4). We believe that there is a radical 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 the distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting joy 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; Mat. 25:34-41; John 8:21; Rev. 20:14-15)