

FAIRVIEW FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
2058 CHESNEE HIGHWAY
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA 29303

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

- (A) **The Bible.** The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament was given by inspiration of God and are our infallible rule of faith and practice.
- (B) **God.** There is one living and true God, revealed in nature as the Creator, Preserver, and Righteous Governor of the universe; and in the Scriptures as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet as one God, infinitely wise and good, whom all intelligent creatures are to love, adore, and obey supremely.
- (C) **Christ.** Christ is God manifest in the flesh in His divine nature truly God, in human nature truly man. The mediator between God and man, once crucified, He is now risen and glorified and is our ever-present Savior and Lord.
- (D) **The Holy Spirit.** The Scriptures assign to the Holy Spirit all the attributes of God.
- (E) **The Government of God.** God exercises a wise and benevolent providence over all beings and things by maintaining the constitution and laws of nature. He also performs special acts, not otherwise provided for, as the highest welfare of men requires.
- (F) **The Sinfulness of Man.** Man was created innocent but by disobedience fell into a state of sin and condemnation. His posterity, therefore, inherits a fallen nature of such tendencies that, all who come to years of accountability, sin and become guilty before God.
- (G) **The Work of Christ.** The Son of God by His incarnation, life, sufferings, death and resurrection affected for all redemption for sin that is full and free and is the ground of salvation by faith.
- (H) **The Terms of Salvation.** The conditions of salvation are: (a) Repentance or sincere sorrow for sin and hearty renunciation of it. (b) Faith or the unreserved committal of one's self to Christ as Savior and Lord with purpose to love and obey Him in all things. In the exercise of saving faith, the soul is renewed by the Holy Spirit, freed from the dominion of sin, and becomes a child of God. (c) Continuance in faith and obedience until death.
- (I) **Election.** God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation. Hence, by faith in Christ, men become His elect.
- (J) **Freedom of the Will.** The human will is free and self-controlled having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the Spirit or to resist them and perish.

- (K) **Salvation Free.** God desires the salvation of all; the Gospel invites all; the Holy Spirit strives with all; and whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely.
- (L) **Perseverance.** All believers in Christ, who through grace persevere in holiness to the end of life, have the promise of eternal salvation.
- (M) **Gospel Ordinances.** Baptism, or the immersion of believers in water, the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be perpetuated under the Gospel. Feet Washing, an ordinance which teaches humility and reminds the believers of the necessity of a daily cleansing from all sin, is to be ministered to all true believers.
- (N) **Tithing.** God commanded tithes and offerings in the Old Testament; Jesus endorsed it in the Gospel (Matthew 23:23); and the apostle Paul said, "*Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.*" (I Corinthians 16:2). Both the Old and the New Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work. 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).
- (O) **The Christian Sabbath.** The divine law requires that one day in seven be set apart from secular employments and amusements for rest, worship, holy works and activities, and personal communion with God.
- (P) **Resurrection, Judgment, and Final Retribution.** The Scriptures teach the resurrection of all men at the last day. They that have trusted Christ as their Savior will come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have rejected Christ into the resurrection of damnation; then the wicked will "*go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*"
- (Q) **The Church.**

The Local Church

1. The local congregation of believers is the only visible form of the "*church*" founded by the direct authority of Scripture. Free Will Baptists, therefore, recognize the local church as the sole source of authority possessed and exercised within the visible church.
2. The local church is an independent and self-governing body, with full authority to transact its business, choose its pastor and officers, receive, discipline, and dismiss members, hold free title to all its properties and conduct all its internal affairs.

- (R) **Separation.** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations are commanded of God (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).
- (S) **The Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in that “*blessed hope*,” the personal, Imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thess. 1:10; I Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19-21:6).
- (T) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of four basic institutions: (1) the home; (2) the church; (3) the state and; (4) employment. Every person is subject to these authorities. But all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balance.
- (U) **Human Sexuality.**
1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex. Any employee of the church becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment. (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).
 2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23). First Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles including associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. Indeed, the Bible condemns a sexual immorality – “*fornication*” in the Authorized Version – all sexual intercourse outside marriage as defined above. It also encourages Christians to flee from sexual immorality because of its destructive effects and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:12-20). Romans 1:18-32 makes clear that it is not only sinful to engage in homosexual unions, but also to approve of such sins in others or to encourage their practice. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve or promote in any way adultery or any other form of sexual immorality – including, but not limited to pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, bestiality, or homosexual

union. This is made clear in many passages in the Old and New Testaments.

Our church follows what the Bible reveals as the “*sure foundation*” of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29; I Corinthians 14:37). If our church is to bear the name Christian authentically, we are called to teach and practice these teachings and are not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority. Through strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, if the two come into conflict about matters as foundational as marriage, we must ultimately obey God rather than man (Acts 4:18-21).

Sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to those named above, are inconsistent with the teachings, of the Bible and the church. Lewd conduct; transgender behavior; and the creation, distribution, or viewings of pornography are incompatible with God’s purposes for human sexuality.

(V) Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are equal in position before God that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim.2: 8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
2. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and in the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
3. We believe that God has ordained the family as the functional institution of human society. The husband is to love the wife as Christ loved the church. The wife is to submit herself to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage of the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7).

(W) Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon the Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations and to refrain from immodest and immoderate appearances. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Lev. 19:28; I Cor. 6:19-20).

(X) Marriage

We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, that marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world and is intended as a lifelong union of one man and one woman. This understanding is supported by the account of creation in Genesis, chapters 1 and 2. Genesis 1:26-27 indicates that God created man in His own image, as male and female. The passage implies that the unity of a man and woman in marriage is in some way reflective of the image of God in mankind. Genesis 2:18 provides a more detailed account, relating that God created the first man, Adam, and decided that it was not good for him to be alone. God indicated that He would make "*an help meet for him*," which means a helper suitable for or matching him. Then God brought all of the animals to Adam, but none of them was such a suitable helper; so God created Eve, the first woman, from part of Adam himself. God did not create a second man to be Adam's helper, or an assortment of multiple women, but one woman. Together they were man and wife and had "*no shame*" or sin in their union (Genesis 2:18-25).

Jesus Christ reaffirmed the teaching of the Old Testament when He said, as recorded in Matthew 19:4-6: "*Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

The Apostle Paul states in Ephesians 5:22-32 that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special, divine metaphor that illustrates the union of Christ and the Church. For this reason also, only a union between one man and one woman can be a Biblical marriage because no other union – whether of two men, two women, or any other arrangement – could illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church in accord with this Biblical teaching.

(Y) Divorce and Remarriage. We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the office of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

(Z) Abortion. 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 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; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

- (AA) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).
- (BB) **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 possess 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).
- (CC) **(Euthanasia.** We believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, facilitates premature death, is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. We do not believe that discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome is euthanasia. (Ex. 20:13; 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28).
- (DD) **Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I Peter 3:8-9; I John 3:17-18).
- (EE) **Protection of Children.** We believe that children are a heritage of the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molest a child. (Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:6; Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14).

SECTION 2 – AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith.