

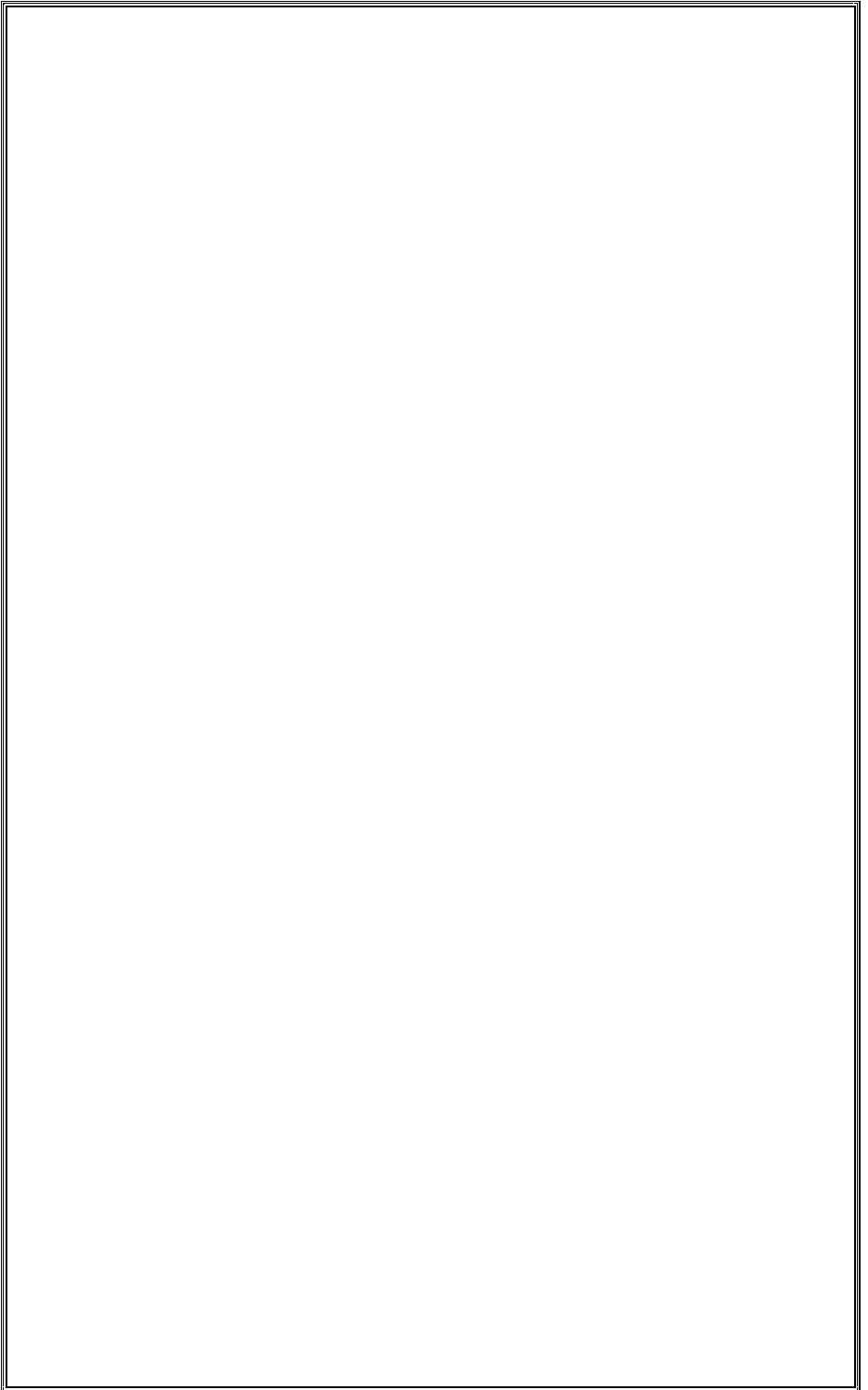
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church

Swartz Creek, MI 48473

Statement of Faith

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PREAMBLE

The mainstream of true Baptist life in the English-speaking world has been historically manifested in churches rather than in social institutions: and its true doctrinal heritage has been preserved in the statements of these churches, both independently and by association. This mainstream of Baptist life has been solidly identified with the Calvinistic soteriology, as is reflected in such antecedents of the New Hampshire Confession as the First London Confession, the Second London Confession, and the Philadelphia Confession. The churches thus identified were known as PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES, both in England and in America. The modified New Hampshire Confession, hereinafter set forth, preserves this essential doctrinal position.

Articles of Faith

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men and is divinely inspired and is inerrant and infallible in the original autographs. It is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction that has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Ti 3:16-17. (2 Pt 1:21; 2 Sa 23:2; Ac 1:6, 3:21; Jn10:35; Lk 16:29-31; Ps 119:31; Ro 3:1,2)

“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.” Pr 30:5-6. (Jn 17:17; Rev 22:18,19; Ro 3:4)

“For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.” Ro 2:12.

“If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.” Jn 12:47-48. (1 Co 4:3,4; Lk 10:10-16; 12:47,48)

II. The True God

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit whose name is Yahweh (YHWH), 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.

“God is a Spirit” Jn 4:24a.

“His understanding is infinite” Ps 147:5.

“That they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.” Ps 83:18. (Heb 3:4; Ro 1:20; Jer 10:10)

“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?” Ex 15:11. (Isa 6:3; 1 Pe 1:15,16; Rev 4:6-8)

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mk 12:30.

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” Rev 4:11. (Mt 10:37; Jer 2:12,13)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” Mt 28:19. (Jn 15:26; 1 Co 12:4-6; 1 Jn 5:17)

III. The Fall of Man

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil and negatively without ability to please God; and therefore, under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Ge 1:27. “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” Ge 1:31a. (Ecc. 7:29; Ac 17:26; Ge 2:16)

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” Ge 3:6. (Ro 5:12)

“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners” Ro 5:19. (Jn 3:6; Ps 51:6; Ro 5:15-19; 8:7)

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;” Isa 53:6a. (Ge 6:12; Ro 3:9-18)

“Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” Eph 2:3. (Ro 1:18,32; 2:1-16; Gal 3:10; Mt 20:15)

“The soul who sins shall die.” Eze 18:20a. “So they are without excuse” Ro 1:20b. “...so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.” Ro 3:19b. (Gal 3:22)

IV. God’s Purpose of Grace

We believe that the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

“...but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,” 2 Ti 1:8b-9.

“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” 2 Ti 2:10. (1 Co 9:22; Ro 8:28-30; Jn 6:37-40; 2 Pe1:10)

“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,” 1 Th 1:4.

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many

brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” Ro 8:29-30. (Isa 42:16; Ro 11:29)

V. The Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God’s grace. Jesus Christ, God’s Son, took upon Himself man’s nature, yet without sin.

Through His mediatorial office of priest, Christ, having lived a sinless life of obedience to the Law of God, died under the curse of the Law for the sins of all who believe in Him. This Jesus made a full and final atonement for the sins of all those given to Him by the Father and for none else. Such salvation is freely bestowed upon whomever God chooses and is not conditioned upon foreseen faith or repentance, but wholly upon the mercy and the grace of God. Those saved are secure in Christ since He, as the atoning Priest and Sacrifice, is now risen from the dead, ascended into glory, seated at the right hand of the Father, and is ever living to make intercession for His people.

The salvation of God is therefore not merely made possible, but is actually procured, through Christ’s vicarious death, for all who believe savingly in Him.

“And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” Jn 8:29. (Php 2:8, Gal 3:13, Heb 4:15)

“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mt 20:28. (Isa 53:11,12; Jn 10:11,15,16; 1 Pe 2:24; Heb 9:28)

“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” Php 2:6-7. (Heb 2:9,14; 2 Co 5:21)

“For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.” Ro 9:15-16. (Jn 1:12,13; 2 Th 2:13, 14; Eph 1:3-7)

“He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” Heb 9:12. (Heb 9:13,14; Heb 10:10,12-14; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Pe 2:9,10)

VI. Regeneration

We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self, to a love of holiness and God; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of God, in a manner incomprehensible to reason; the evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without regeneration salvation is impossible.

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Jn 3:3.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Jn 3: 6.

“Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;” 1 Pe 1:23.

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth,” Jas 1:18a.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Co 5:17.

“If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.” 1 Jn 2:29.

“And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” Eph 4:24.

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him,” Col 2:13a.

“Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.” Ro 6:13.

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,” Col 1:13.

“Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jn 1:13.

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Co 6:11.

VII. Repentance

We believe that the Scriptures teach that repentance is a personal act prompted by the Spirit; and consists in a godly sorrow for sin, which is offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; true repentance is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon; also by sincere hatred of sin, and a persistent turning away from, and abandonment of all that is evil and unholy. Since none are sinless in this life, repentance needs to be often repeated.

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” Mt 3:1-2.

“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,” Ac 3:19.

“The times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent” Ac 17:30.

“Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” Ac 20:21.

“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of” 2 Co 7:10.

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” Lk 24:47.

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel; and remission of sins” Ac 5:31.

“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.” Ro 2:5

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa 55:7.

VIII. Faith

We believe that the Scriptures teach that faith as an evangelical grace wrought by the Spirit, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as its Sacrifice and Savior. It is an assent of the mind and a consent of the heart, consisting mainly of belief and trust; the testimony of God is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation; by faith the believer is brought into vital relations with God, freely justified, and lives as seeing Him who is invisible. Faith cannot save, but it reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

“And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Ac 16:31.

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Ro 1:17.

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ro 5:1.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” Ro 10:4.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Heb 11:1.

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Heb 11:6.

“And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” and he was called a friend of God.” Jas 2:23.

“The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.” Ps 34:22.

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.” Ps 125:1.

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.” Jer 17:7

“The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” Ro 3:22a.

“For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Ro 10:10.

IX. Justification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel by which Christ secures to such who believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of faith, His perfect righteousness is freely and judicially imputed to us by God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

“And by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” Ac 13:39. (Isa 3:11,12; Ro 8:1)

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Ro 5:1-2. (Ro 5:3,11; 1 Co 1:30,31; Mt 6:33; 1 Ti 4:8)

“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” Ro 5:9. (Zec 13:1; Mt 9:6; Ac 10:43)

“For from his fullness we have all received,” Jn 1:16a. (Eph 3:8)

X. Adoption

We believe that the Scriptures teach that adoption is a gracious act, by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, places believers in the estate and condition of sons. This sonship God established by sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of God and are thus entitled to all the rights, privileges, and promises of sons and are therefore heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God”
Ro 8:14-16

“For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” Gal 3:26.

“To redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” Gal 4:5-6.

“He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,” Eph 1:5.

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” Heb 12:7.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Pe 2:9.

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” 1 Jn 3:1a.

XI. Sanctification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

We further believe that the essential evidences of this sanctification are manifested in the lives of all who are true believers as the fruit of the Spirit and the vicarious Christian graces toward the perfection of a visible reproduction of the life and character of Jesus Christ in contemporary society; and that this purpose is to be pursued in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer, and in the practice of all godly exercises and duties.

We further believe that the gifts of the Spirit have been given to the church for its edification as they have been severally bestowed upon individual believers in various times and places of church history according to the sovereign will of God; and that among these the sign gifts (such as speaking in tongues, miracles, etc.) were bestowed upon the church through chosen individuals during the apostolic days of the church’s infancy for the authentication of message until the completion and distribution of the Scriptures.

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification:” 1 Th 4:3a.

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely,” 1 Th 5:23a.
(2 Co 7:1; 13:9; Eph 1:4)

“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.” Pr 4:18. (2 Co 3:18; Heb 6:1; 2 Pe 1:5-8; Phm 12-16)

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Php 2:12b-13. (Eph 4:11, 12; 1 Pe 2:2; 3:18; 2 Co 13:5)

“Rather train yourself for godliness;” 1 Ti 4:7.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Gal 5:22-23.

“Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” 1 Jn 2:6. (1 Jn 3:3)

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;” 1 Co 12:4.

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith” Ro 12:4-6.

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” Eph 4:11-12. (1 Co12:28-31 and all of 1 Co 12)

“Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.” 1 Co 13:8-10. (1 Co 14)

“It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” Heb 2:3-4

XII. The Perseverance of Saints

We believe that the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.” Jn 6:39.

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,” Jn 8:31. (1 Jn 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18)

“...we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.” Ro 8:28. (Mt 6:30-33)

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Php 1:6. (Php 2:12; Jude 24-25; Heb 1:4; 13:5; Jn 4:4)

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” 1 Jn 2:19. (Jn 13:18; Mt 13:20,21; Jn 6:66-69)

XIII. The Lordship of Christ

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Jesus is Lord over all creation and that all judgment has been committed to Him. We believe that His Lordship is essential to the salvation of His people and must be the ruling concern in the life of the church. We further believe that in His Lordship, Christ has freed us from the covenantal relationship to the Law of Moses and from the law of sin and death and has given us the New Covenant discipline of grace which teaches us that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of goods works.” Tit. 2:12-14.

“Since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.” Jn 17:2.

“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law

of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Ro 8:2-4. (Ro 10:4; 1 Co 1:30; Gal 4:1-7)

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Php 2:9-11. (Col 2:9-10; Jn 5:22-27; Ac 2:32-36)

XIV. A Gospel Church

We believe that the Scriptures teach that a local church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and 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 only Scriptural offices are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Ac 2:41-42. (Ac 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Co 4:17; 1 Ti 3:5)

“And this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.” 2 Co 8:5. (Ac 2:47; 1 Co 5:11,18)

“Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.” 1 Co 11:2. (2 Th 3:7; Ro 16:17-20; 1 Co 11:23; Mt 18:15-20; 1 Co 5:5)

“Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Mt 28:20a. (Jn 14:15; 15:10; I Jn 4:21; 1 Th 4:2; 2 Jn 6)

“...with the overseers and deacons” Php 1:1b (Ac 14:23; 15:22; 1 Ti 3; Tit 1)

XV. Baptism

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ; in the name of the Father, and Son and Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and

resurrection to a new life; that baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper.

“And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.” Ac 8:36-39a. (Mt 3:5,6; Jn 3:22,23; 4:1,2; Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” Mt 18:19. (Ac 10:47,48; Gal 3:26,27)

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Ro 6:4. (Col 2:12; 1 Pe 3:20,21; Ac 22:16)

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” Ac 2:41. (Mt 28:19-20)

XVI. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord; showing their faith, and participation in the merits of His sacrifice, and their hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead; its observance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” Lk 22:19-20. (Mk 14:20-26; Mt 26:27-30; 1 Co 10:16; 1 Co 11:24-30;)

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” 1 Co 11:26. (Mt 28:20)

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” 1 Co 11:28. (Ac 2:42,46; 20:7,11)

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Ac 2:42.

XVII. The Lord's Day

We believe that the day commonly called the "Lord's Day" is the first day of the week, and that this was the accustomed day for the Church of the New Testament to assemble because the Sabbath of the Old Covenant had been fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We therefore agree that this custom should continue because of the command of Scripture not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together." (Heb10:25)

The full purpose of such "assembling" is that we might, "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," attend to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, support the divine commission for the church, and most of all to worship our Sovereign Redeemer.

"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight." Ac 20:7. (Rev 1:10; Jn 20:19; 1 Co 16:1-2)

"For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,' " although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. Heb 4:3-11. (Heb 10:23-35; Ac 2:42-47; 20:7)

XVIII. Civil Government and Religious Liberty

We believe that the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and those magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience. Civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with religious matters.

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.” Ro 13:1-3a.

“Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” 1 Pe 2:13.

“Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Mt 22:21a. (Tit 3:1; 1 Pe 2:13; 1 Ti 2:1-8)

“We must obey God rather than men. Ac 5:29b.

“do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” Mt 10:28. (Da 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Ac 4:18-20)

We further believe that liberty of the soul is a key distinctive of Baptist teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of all, the Judge of the living and the dead and is thus the only Lord of conscience, having a peculiar right so to be. Thus we believe that it is the will and mind of God, for these Gospel times, that all should have the free liberty of their own conscience in matters of religion, or worship without the least oppression of persecution. For any in authority to act otherwise we confidently believe to be expressly contrary to the mind of Christ, who requires that whatsoever men would have others do to them, they should do to others.

“There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?” Jas 4:12. (Ro 14:4; Rev 19:14)

“If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations - “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are

used) - according to human precepts and teachings?" Col 2:20-22. (Mt 15:9; 1 Co 7:23)

"But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge," Ac 4:19. (Ac 5:29)

"...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." 1 Pe 5:2-3. (2 Co 1:24; Mt 7:12)

XIX. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified the 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; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

"Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him." Mal 3:18. (Pr 12:26; Isa 5:20; Ge 18:23; Jer 15:19; Ac 10:34,35; Ro 6:16)

"The righteous shall live by faith." Ro 1:17.

"If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him." 1 Jn 2:29. (1 Jn 3:7; Ro 6:18,22; 1 Co 11:32)

"We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." 1 Jn 5:19.

"For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Gal 3:10. (Jn 3:36; Isa 57:21; Ps 10:4; Isa 55:6,7)

"The wicked is overthrown through his evildoing, but the righteous finds refuge in his death." Pr 14:32.

"But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.'" Lk 16:25. (Jn 8 :21-24; Lk 12:4,5; Lk 11:23-26; Jn 12:25,26; Mt 7:13,14)

XX. The World to Come

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven; and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless sorrow, and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgement will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” 1 Pe 4:7. (1 Co 7:29-31; Heb 1:10-13; Mt 24:35; 1 Jn 2:17; Mt 28:20)

“...having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.” Ac 24:15. (1 Co 15:12-58; Lk 14:14; Da 12:2; Jn 5:28,29; 6:40; 11:25,26; 2 Ti 1:10; Ac 10:42)

“So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous.” Mt 13:49. (Mt 13:37-43; 24:30,31)

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Mt 25:41.

“Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.” Rev 22:21. (1 Co 6:9,10; Mk 9:43-48; 2 Pe 2:9)

“...since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” 2 Thes 1:6-10. (Heb 6:1,2)

“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!” 2 Pe 3:11-12.

XXI. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the return of Christ will be personal, visible, and in His resurrected body, and that His return is both a day of salvation and a day of judgement. We believe that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given by the Father. That day will not only be a day of judgment for apostate angels, but also for all who have lived upon the earth. All men shall appear before the tribunal of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, their words, and their deeds and to receive recompense according to what they have done in the body whether good or evil.

“And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” Ac 1:10-11. (1 Th 4:13-18; 1 Co 15:23,24)

“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,” Jn 5:22. (Mt 11:27; Mt 25:31-46; Jn 5:22-30)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” 2 Co 5:10. (Mt 12:36; Ro 14:10; 2 Ti 4:8)

Amendments

XXII. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and that He is of the same essence and proceeds from the Father and the Son. His activity includes all the acts of God from creation to redemption. He administers the New Covenant, as planned by the Father and purchased by the Son, in regeneration, sanctification, and final glorification of the elect. He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgement, and bears witness to the truth of the gospel. He effects the new birth, and seals all so re-born. He witnesses to the glory of Christ to the believer; He guides, teaches, permanently indwells, empowers, comforts and helps him in all his life and work. The baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit is initial, and His filling of the believer is commanded and should be continually pursued.

Mt 28:19; Heb 9:14; Jn 14:16-18, 26; Lk 1:35; Ge 1:1-3; 2 Th 2:7; Jn 16: 8-11; Jn 15:26-27; Ac 5:30-32; Jn 3:5-6; Eph 1:13-14; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33; Ac 11:16; Lk 24:49; Jn 16:13; Jn 14:26; Ro 8:14, 26-27; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pe 1:2.

adopted July 1991

XXIV. Gender, Marriage, and 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 (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). SGBC will only conduct a marriage ceremony and recognize the marriage between a biological man and a biological woman.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4).

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of SGBC as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to SGBC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by SGBC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by the Scriptures and the doctrines of SGBC.

Adopted Jan. 2020

XXIV. The Sanctity of Life

We believe that Biblical revelation clearly and consistently affirms that human life is formed by God in His image and therefore worthy of honor and dignity (Gen 1:27; 9:6), and that God alone is the Author of life and He alone numbers our days, from the moment of conception until natural death (Job 14:5-7; Ps 39:4), and whereas the Bible commands us to honor our parents and the aged (Ex 20:12; Lev 19:32; Eph 6:2);

We believe that children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord and calls us to speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

(As of the writing of this amendment, an estimate of more than 63,000,000 unborn babies have been murdered in the womb since the legalization of abortion in 1973 (*Roe v. Wade*); with legislation and/or court rulings having effectively legalized physician-assisted suicide in several states, with additional states considering similar action. Recent federal directives seek to compel religious organizations to provide coverage for abortifacient technologies and services).

We believe, therefore, that dignity and sanctity of human life exists at all stages of development, from conception to natural death, and further affirm our repudiation of the genocide of legalized abortion in the United States (*and worldwide*) and call on the civil authorities to enact laws that defend the lives of the unborn.

We exhort our government for legislation that ensures that all mothers will be fully informed by medical providers of the life development of their unborn children, and call on our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to collaborate on behalf of justice, protection of human life, and defend the cause of human flourishing.

We believe and are committed to defend and protect the unborn, the vulnerable, and the aged; and that we are called to show the love of Christ through appropriate means to those most vulnerable to the victimization of the abortion industry, showing grace and mercy to those who grieve with repentance over past abortions.

We believe and remain resolved that all believers care for the elderly among us, to show them honor and dignity, and prayerfully support and counsel those who are providing end-of-life care for the aged, the terminally ill, and

the chronically infirmed; and that we remain committed to the defense and protection of human life at every stage; while remaining committed to pray and work for the repeal of unjust laws and inhumane practices that degrade human life, all the while looking toward the day when our Lord will make all things new and "...will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Rev 21:4).

Adopted Jan. 2022

XXV. Right to Religious Exemption of Mandatory Medical Procedures

We believe and stand firm within the two-thousand-year Christian faith, and committed to the doctrinal standards of our church constitution and the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures. Because of this, we affirm our religion's principles of liberty of conscience as expressed in our confession of faith.

We believe and are committed to honoring and preserving human life from conception to natural death and teach that individuals and families bear full responsibility for making medical and healthcare decisions in the fear or the Lord. We also affirm that an individual's conscience is a gift from God and is answerable to Him alone who is Lord of the conscience.

We believe the Scripture teaches that any act a person believes to be sin is in fact sin for that person, whether it is intrinsically sinful or not. "For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

Furthermore, our church statement of faith states that, "We believe that the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience. Civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with religious matters."

We believe that mandatory medical procedures do not conform to that which is lawful, i.e. that which conforms to the eternal law of God. These mandates fall outside the jurisdiction of the divinely instituted authority of the state or employer. Therefore, individuals are under no moral obligation to comply with such mandates. Furthermore, these mandates fall outside the jurisdiction of the government according to the first amendment of our own civil constitution.

We believe, and therefore, we state our unequivocal support on the basis of religious convictions, for the right to refuse mandatory medical procedures (*including vaccinations*), whether ordered by a branch of civil government, employer, or any other institution to which an individual is subject or dependent. In addition, the Holy Scriptures teach Christians that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19).

We believe that stewardship of our bodies before God necessitates being free to make decisions about health and medical treatments according to Scriptural principles, the light of nature, and the dictates of individual conscience. Therefore, the refusal to obey mandatory medical procedures may also be based on an individual's sincere belief that his or her (*or his or her child's*) life, health, welfare, or ethical integrity is potentially endangered by such procedures.

We believe that our Christian faith protects the liberty of individuals and families to refuse any medical procedure or product on the basis of sincerely held concerns for known or unknown side effects, experimental or emergency uses, potential involvement in fetal cell lines (*whether in development or testing*), or medical and/or political corruption or coercion.

The sixth commandment, "You shall not murder" (Ex 20:13) makes every person responsible to preserve their own life, and the life of others and prohibits the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tends to result in such outcome. We believe, in good faith, that involvement in such medical procedures violates this commandment.

Therefore, we believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and uphold the rights and responsibilities of every member of SGBC to make responsible medical decisions for themselves and their families, including their right to refuse any medical procedure or treatment on religious grounds. And hereby call upon all authorities: political, governmental, organizational, or otherwise, to respect these deeply held religious convictions by upholding this religious liberty and/or providing religious exemptions as requested.

Adopted Jan. 2022