

Statement of Faith and Beliefs

Abner Creek Baptist Church

This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in June 2000.

Section 1. Our Beliefs

"What We Believe" Based on *The Baptist Faith and Message*.

(For a full statement with scripture references visit www.sbc.net)

1. The Scriptures – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- The Bible was written by men who were inspired by God.
- The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man.
- The Bible is a perfect treasure of divine instruction; it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter – therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.
- The Bible reveals the principles by which God judges us.
- The Bible is the true center of Christian union.
- The Bible is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions are to be tried.
- The whole Bible is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

2. God

- There is only one living and true God.
- He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being. He is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.
- He is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful. God is all knowing.
- We owe God the highest love, reverence, and obedience.
- God is eternal.
- God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

- God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace.
- He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.
- God is truly Father to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- He is fatherly in His attitude toward all people.

B. God the Son

- Christ is the eternal Son of God.
- In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.
- Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God.
- Jesus took upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities, fully identifying Himself with mankind yet without sin.
- Jesus obeyed God's law perfectly – He never sinned.
- In His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

- He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who had been with them before His crucifixion.
- He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man.
- He will return in power and glory to judge the world and complete His redemptive mission.
- He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

C. God the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine.
- He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures.
- Through illumination He enables men to understand truth.
- He exalts Christ.
- He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.
- He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration Salvation.
- At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ.
- He cultivates Christian Character Sanctification, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through his church Service.
- He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption.
- His presence in the believer is the guarantee that God will finish the work of conforming him to Christ.
- He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

3. Man

- Man (humanity) is the special creation of God, made in His own image.
- He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation.
- In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice.
- By his own free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race.
- Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, fell from his original innocence, and caused his posterity to inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.
- Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation.
- Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship.
- Only the grace of God can enable man to fulfill the purpose for which he was created.
- Since God created man in His own image, and since Christ died for man, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

4. Salvation

- Salvation redeems the whole man.
 - Our fallenness extends to the whole of who we are.
 - Salvation includes even the resurrection of our bodies.
- Salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer.
- There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
- Salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
 - Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. – 2 Cor. 5:17-21

- Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness (not our works) of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God. – Romans 3:5-8, 21-26
- Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. It is a lifelong process. – 1 Cor. 3:16-17
- Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the Christian. – Romans 8:28-30

5. God's Purpose of Grace

- Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.
- It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end.
- It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable.
- It excludes boasting and promotes humility.
- All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

6. The Church

- A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel.
 - By covenant we mean that we will:
 - Teach and uphold the truths of the gospel.
 - Interpret, proclaim, and defend the scriptures.
 - Practice church discipline (receive only those who give profession and evidence of salvation through faith in Christ; correct, warn, and rebuke those who stray; exclude those who refuse the loving discipline; and restore those who repent).
- The church observes the two ordinances of Christ – baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- The church members exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.
- Each church seeks to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.
- Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.
- While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.
- The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

7. Baptism

- Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior; the believer's death to sin; the burial of the old life; and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.
- It is a testimony to his/her faith in the final resurrection of the dead.
- It is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

8. The Lord's Supper

- The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

9. The Lord's Day

- The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance.
- It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.
- Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

10. The Kingdom of God

- The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King.
- Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ.
 - Luke 17:20-21; Luke 12:31; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 3:2; Romans 5:17; Colossians 1:13
- Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth.
- The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.
 - Romans 8:18-21; Revelation 21-22

11. Last Things

- God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end.
- According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth (Philippians 3:20); the dead will be raised (1 Corinthians 15:51-52); and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 3:12-15)
- The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.
- The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

12. Evangelism and Missions

- It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations.
- The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life.
- Missionary effort is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations.
- It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Section 2. Statement on Marriage, Gender 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 that 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.) 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; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Abner Creek Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Abner Creek Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Abner Creek Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

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 and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Abner Creek Baptist Church.

Section 3. Statement on Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

Section 4. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct

The statement of faith does 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. For purposes of Abner Creek Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our pastor is Abner Creek Baptist Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

