

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1.1 FINAL AUTHORITY FOR MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of the First Original Free Will Baptist Church of Beaufort, NC (hereafter referred to as “First Free Will Baptist Church”; the “Beaufort Church”; or the “Church”) and its members.

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 the Beaufort Church’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Pastoral Staff and Deacons are the Church’s final interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application.

- A. The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastoral staff and deacons. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- B. The Godhead.** We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections: self-existent, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, holy, just, merciful, and immutable. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26)
- C. The Person and Work of Christ.**
 1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
 2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet.2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)

3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)

D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

E. The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

F. Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that those who would comply with the condition of salvation (faith) constitute His elect, and that God has given to man the freedom of choice (common grace) permitting him to yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit or to resist and perish. We believe that God desires the salvation of all people everywhere. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2-8:10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Matt. 12:31-32; 1 John 1:9)

G. The Perseverance and Assurance of Believers.

1. We believe God enables the redeemed to persevere in their faith, yet permits believers to maintain their freedom of will to reject His salvation, commit apostasy, and become forever lost. (John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:4-10, 2:20-22; John 15:6; Heb. 6:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Rev. 22:19)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

H. The Sanctification of Believers. We believe that every believer is sanctified in Christ at conversion; that this setting apart continues during the Christian life as the believer grows in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (not to sinless perfection); and that it is completed

when the believer stands in the presence of Christ, either at death or at the coming of Christ for His Church. (1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:2-3)

I. The Church.

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
4. We recognize water baptism (by immersion, for believers only), the Lord's Supper (which is to be open to all born-again believers present), and Feet Washing, as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; John 13:3-17.)

J. Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 5:14-7:1; 2 Tim 3:1-4; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)

K. The Second Advent of Christ. We believe in that "blessed hope," the personal, imminent return of Jesus Christ. (1 Thes. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13)

L. The Eternal State.

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where they consciously await their bodily resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; I Thes. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

M. The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, a fallen angel, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Luke 10:18; Rev. 20:10)

N. Creation. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. God's creation was perfect, but became marred by man's sin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11; Rom. 5:12)

O. Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. 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 balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

P. Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality.

1. 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.
2. 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). Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased or rented by this church will only be those sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their respective genders were determined at birth. Whenever a conflict exists between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Cor 7:1-9).
3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, sex trafficking, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).
4. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Beaufort Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Beaufort 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 Thes. 5:22).
5. 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).
6. 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 the Beaufort Church.

Q. Family Relationships.

1. 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 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; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from 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)

- R. Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies, except on the grounds of adultery.
- S. Sanctity of Human Life.** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all of 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. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49: 1, 5; Jer. 1:4; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
- T. Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. 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 sinful 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; 1 John 3:17-18)
- U. Lawsuits between Believers.** Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching (and therefore forbidden), and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor. 6:1-7). Therefore, we believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church. 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. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32) Otherwise, members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church or another believer for mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.
- V. Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples 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 reach our local, regional, national, and global communities with the gospel. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)
- W. Giving.** 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 every Christian should give 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 person relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the offering once the gift has been made. (Prov. 3:9-10; Matt. 22:21; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

Section 1.2 AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. A fuller presentation of our doctrine is presented in *A Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc.* 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 teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is to be accepted and honored for membership. All preaching and teaching of this church ministry shall be in agreement with the Statement of Faith. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the Statement of Faith, the pastor and Board, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.