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**Declaration of Faith**

### **DECLARATION OF FAITH OF SOUTHWINDS BAPTIST CHURCH**

A. **THE SCRIPTURES:** The Holy Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It has God as its author, salvation as its end and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It is inerrant and infallible in its original manuscript, which is to be taken as verbally inspired. The Bible is perfectly preserved in the text known as Textus Receptus, Received, or Majority Text, from which the Authorized King James Version of the Bible is translated. It reveals the principals by which God judges us, and therefore, is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

 *Ref: II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; Proverbs 30:5-6*

B. **GOD**: There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

1. **God the Father**: We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, boundless in love, infinite in wisdom and measureless in power. We believe that He concerns Himself in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayers and that He saves from sin and death, all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, His Son.

 *Ref:* *Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3;20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

2. **God the Son:** We believe in Jesus Christ, God the Son, pre-existent with the Father, begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; sinless in life, infallible in His teachings, making atonement for the sins of the world by His substitutionary death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, His perpetual intercession for His people, the catching away of His church in the rapture and His glorious second advent according to promise. We believe that the promise of His return includes first, the personal, pre-millennial and pre-tribulation return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to rapture His church off the earth. Second, His return to earth with His saints after the Tribulation to set up His millennial reign.

*Ref: Hebrews 9:22; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 13:8; John 1: John 16:28; Revelation 19 & 20*

3. **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. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. We believe in the deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit. We believe He came from God the Father to convince and convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; to regenerate; sanctify; indwell; comfort; and bestow the spiritual gifts to believers by which the believer serves God through His church. He also seals the believer until the day of redemption. His presence in the believer is the assurance of eternal salvation.

#### *Ref: Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:16; John 14:16, 17, 26; John 16:13-14; John 3:3-7; John 16:7-11; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9-11; 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:19*

C. **MAN:** We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. We believe that all human beings are born with a sinful nature. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and that Christ died for man; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

##### *Ref: Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:6-24; Romans 3:28; Romans 5:12-19*

D. **THE DEVIL OR SATAN:** We believe that Satan was created by God and enjoyed heavenly honors. Through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he was cast out of Heaven by God and drew after him a host of angels. He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be the enemy of God and man’s great tempter. He is the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions and the chief power behind the present apostasy. We believe Satan to be the lord of antichrists and the leader of all powers of darkness destined to final defeat at the hand of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ. Finally to suffer judgment of eternal justice in Hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

*Ref: Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Revelations 12:7-90; Revelations 20:1-3; Revelations 20:10*

E. **SALVATION:** Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man: body, soul, and spirit. It is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood, obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration (a new birth), sanctification and glorification.

##### *Ref: Hebrews 9:14-22; John 6:44; John 14:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; John 3:16; James 1:21;*

1. ***Regeneration*** *or* the new birth is a work of God’s grace, whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is the quickening of the spirit wrought by the Holy Spirit through the conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin, toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and the commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

###### Ref: Luke 13:3-5; Romans 4:5; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; 2:1

2. ***Sanctification*** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes and grows in grace and usefulness to God and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Situations designed by God for each individual Believer, as it fits in God’s plan of sanctification for that Believer, brings about growth. Even though the believer will never reach perfection in this life, growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Holy 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, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and suffer temporal judgment of God upon themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Ref; John 17:19; I Corinthians 1:2 , 30-31; I Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 2:11; Romans 5:16; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10; Jude 1:24; I Peter 1:2-5; Romans 8:28; Psalms 138:8; Philippians 2:13; James 1:2-4; II Timothy 2:21; I Thessalonians 5:23; Philippians 3:12-14*

3. ***Glorification*** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

###### Ref: Romans 8:22-23; I Corinthians 15:52-53; 1 Peter 1:7-9

F. **CHURCH:** We believe that a visible church of Christ is a local congregation of saved, baptized people who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, who observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Who are committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges vested in them by His Word and seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The Church is Christ’s body and it operates under the headship of Jesus Christ.

*Ref: Ephesians 5:25-29; I Corinthians 12:12-13; I Corinthians 12:27-28; Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:12-19; I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 14:23; I Timothy 3; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34*

G. **ORDINANCES:** Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the ordinances of the Church.

1. 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 Jesus Christ. It is a testimony of faith in the final resurrection of the dead. It has no saving power, only as an answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism comes after the profession of faith in Christ as the Son of God.

#### *Ref: I Peter 3:31; Acts 8:36-37; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13*

2. The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience, whereby Believers in Christ, through the partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine (unfermented), memorialize the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. It is commemorated as often as directed by The Senior Pastor or his delegate.

#### *Ref: I Corinthians 11:23-28*

H. **THE LORD’S DAY:** The first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. It is the day that the New Testament Christians assembled together for regular worship. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

##### *Ref: Acts 20:7; Mark 16:9; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2*

I. **LAST THINGS:** We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the saved to eternal life and blessedness in Heaven and the unsaved to eternal, conscious suffering and woe in Hell. The dead in Christ will rise first, then we, who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. This is the first resurrection, followed by the Judgment Seat of Christ for Believers. Then comes the judgment of God upon this sinful world in the tribulation period, afterward Jesus, our Lord, will come with His saints to establish His Millennial kingdom. After the Millennial period, Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire and the unsaved dead shall be resurrected (second resurrection) and stand with all those who rejected Jesus as Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment. The unsaved will be separated from God and consigned forever to the Lake of Fire that burns with fire and brimstone.

##### *Ref: I Thessalonians 4:13-19; I Corinthians 15:51-52; Matthew 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 2:28 Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13*

J. **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS:** It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ, to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all

 other means in harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

 *Ref: Matthew 28:18-20; John 4:35-36; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 20; John 15:7-8, 16; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:1-11*

1. **STEWARDSHIP:** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual, and all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual indebtedness to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the Gospel and a binding stewardship in their possessions. Believers are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents and material possessions, and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God in helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, proportionately, liberally, sacrificially and by faith.

*Ref: Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 3:23; I Corinthians 12:27-28;Matthew 6:19-34; II Corinthians 9:6-9; Colossians 3:2; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38; Luke 6:38*

L. **THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER:** The Christian should work to provide for the orphaned, needy, aged, helpless and the sick. He should oppose every form of greed, selfishness and vice. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any Bible issue confronting society, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. It should be realized that lasting social change must be the result of changed hearts. Therefore, the greatest contribution the Church can make to social betterment is to bring individuals into a heart-changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

##### *Ref: James 1:27; Titus 3:8-14; II Corinthians 5:17-21*

M. **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY:** The state owes, to every Church, protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Because civil government is ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The Church should not resort to civil power to carry on its work. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. A free Church in a free state is the Christian ideal and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion, without interference by the civil power.

##### *Ref: Mark 12:17; Acts 5:29*

**N. HUMAN IDENTITY (SEXUALITY) AND MARRIAGE:** Human identity is defined by God in the Holy Scriptures as male and female as distinguished by their unique created design and clear biological and physical differences. Every Christian has the privilege and responsibility of representing the Lord Jesus Christ in their unique created human identity and gender. Saved, born-again Christians, spiritually affected by the New Birth, are commanded by God’s Word, and should physically naturally gravitate to their God given human identity based on their created design. We therefore believe, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, that Human Sexuality will also naturally gravitate towards interest in the Sex opposite of one’s natural and physical created design.

 Human Marriage, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, is also defined by God. Human Marriage is the unique union of a Male and Female according to their God given created identity and sex. Therefore, marriage is the union of two people of opposite sex and correct gender representation to their original design. Marriage then, is not the union of two people of the same identity or sex nor is it the union of two people of altered identity regardless of gender preference.

 Southwinds Baptist Church upholds the Scriptural teaching and outline of Marriage between a Male and Female in proper representation of their original creation and design. Furthermore, Southwinds Baptist Church and its Pastor’s and Ministers will not perform or participate in marriage ceremonies that violate Scripture.

 *Ref: Genesis 1:26 – 27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21 – 22; Genesis 2:18; Genesis 2:22 – 25; Matthew 19:3 – 6; Mark 10:6; Ephesians 5:21 – 33*