



Statement of Faith

What we Believe Matters

Summit Point Church supports the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 of the Southern Baptist Convention as well as the following Statement of Faith as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures:

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as originally written were God-breathed, both verbally and in every part. We believe God, who is Truth, communicated through Spirit-controlled men so that the Scriptures are without error and therefore authoritative in all they teach and in all matters they touch. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for men and constitutes the only infallible guide for faith and life.

Psalm 19:7-11; Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 5:18; John 10:34-35; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19

Trinity:

We believe there is one, and only one, true and living God; while there is indivisible unity in the Godhead, He exists in three separate persons — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit — equal in every divine attribute and executing distinct, but harmonious office in the work of creation and redemption.

Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 6:27; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:8

God the Father,

We believe God the Father is an infinite, eternal, wise, all powerful, holy, just, good, loving and all-knowing Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth.

Genesis 1:1; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 46:9; Romans 11:33; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 19:6

God the Son,

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man was ever nor can be born of a woman. He is "God manifest in the flesh." He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner's place. He rose bodily on the third day and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, interceding and preparing a place for us.

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:6; John 1:1-4; 14:3; 20:27-28; Acts 15:16; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 7:25; 8:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 3:21

God the Holy Spirit,

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of deity and is equal with God the Father and God the Son. We believe that He was active in creation and is the restrainer of the evil One; that He convicts of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, helps, and distributes spiritual gifts to all believers according to His will and purpose. These gifts are not normative within the church today, but God certainly has the

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power to give as He desires in order to advance the Kingdom as well as His redemptive plan in the world.

Genesis 1:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 7:39; 14:16-17, 26; 16:8-11; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-13, 28-31; 13:8-12; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8, 13

Angels, Good and Evil:

We believe in the existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Angels who have chosen to follow God are ministers for Him on behalf of those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. There were among the hosts of angels those who fell with Satan. They are presently functioning in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, to be resisted by the believer through the armor provided by God. We believe that Satan, the "god of this age" and "the prince of the power of the air," once knew heavenly honors. That because of pride and ambition to be above the Almighty God, he fell and is currently the power of all darkness and evil and is destined for final defeat at the hand of God's Son, and for the judgment of eternal hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isaiah 6; 14:12-15; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-13; Colossians 1:16; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Peter 1:12; 5:8; Jude 6; Revelation 19:16-20; 20:10

Creation:

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was created directly, and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind."

Genesis 1; John 1:3; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 10:6

Man:

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created by a direct act of God and not from any previously existing form of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, the first parents of the entire human race. By voluntary transgression man fell from his sinless state, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature and by choice, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal judgment and separation from God in a place called hell without defense or excuse.

Genesis 1:27; 3:6, 24; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:32; 3:10-23; 5:12-19

Salvation of the Lost:

Grace - We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

Regeneration - We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

Repentance and Christian Faith - We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply

convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

The Church, Christ Bride:

We believe that a visible 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 officers are Pastors / Elders, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Our Mission:

We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission:

First – to make individual disciples;

Second -to build up the Church (Kingdom Mission);

Third – to send out men and women to proclaim the Gospel.

Baptism and The Lord's Supper:

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; 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 it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine (grape juice), are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19-20; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Stewardship:

We believe God's method of financing His earthly work of spreading the Gospel to all nations, the care of the churches and the support of the ministry, is by the tithes and offerings of His people. We believe tithing was instituted long before the Law was ever given and was practiced by the early Church. We believe that God is pleased by the believer who is obedient in tithing, and that tithing is an act of worship, expressed in the believer's faith in God's provision.

Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:8-10

End Times:

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in 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 and after death.

We believe 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 to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:23

Sanctity of Human Life:

We believe that all human life is sacred from fertilization throughout the entire natural human life; that

human beings are created in His image and, as such, are to be protected; that the weak, vulnerable, infirm, handicapped, preborn and needy deserve our respect and our care.

Genesis 1:26; 9:6; Psalm 51:5; 82:3-4; 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41

Marriage:

We believe that the home was the first institution God provided for man; that marriage is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman for life. Furthermore, the husband is to lead his family in all godliness as Christ has demonstrated for us.

Genesis 2:18-24; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Mark 10:9; Romans 1:18-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:2; Ephesians 5:22-23; Jude 7

The Baptism of Children at Summit Point Church

This is often a subject of concern for many parents in our church and while Scripture is quite clear that believers only are to be baptized, the age at which a believer is to be baptized is not directly addressed in Scripture. We do not understand the simple imperative command to be baptized to settle the issue, nor do we understand the imperative to be baptized to forbid raising questions about the appropriateness of a baptismal candidate's maturity. We do understand that the consideration of an appropriate age for a believer to be baptized is a matter not of simple obedience on an issue clearly settled by Scripture, but rather is a matter of Christian wisdom and prudence on an issue not directly addressed by Scripture.

Though the baptisms in the New Testament seem largely to have occurred soon after the initial conversion, all of the individuals we can read of are both adults and coming from a non-Christian context. Both of these factors would tend to lend credibility to a conversion. The credibility of the conversion is the prime consideration, with the effect upon the individual candidate and the church community being legitimate secondary concerns.

We believe that the normal age of baptism should be when the credibility of one's conversion becomes naturally evident to the church community. This would normally be when the child has matured, and is beginning to live more self-consciously as an individual, making their own choices, having left the God-given, intended child-like dependence on their parents for the God-given, intended mature wisdom which marks one who has felt the tug of the world, the flesh and the devil, but has decided, despite these allurements, to follow Christ. While it is difficult to set a certain number of years which are required for baptism, it is appropriate to consider the candidate's maturity. The kind of maturity that we feel it is wise to expect is the maturity which would allow that son or daughter to deal directly with the church as a whole, and not, fundamentally, to be under their parents' authority. As they assume adult responsibilities (sometime in late high school with driving, employment, non-Christian friends, voting, legality of marriage), then part of this, we would think, would be to declare publicly their allegiance to Christ by baptism.

With the consent and encouragement of Christian parents who are members, we will carefully consider requests for baptism before a child has left the home, but would urge the parents to caution at this point. Of course children can be converted. We pray that none of our children ever know any lengthy period of conscious rebellion against God. The question raised by baptism is the ability of others to be fairly confident of that conversion. The malleable nature of children (which changeableness God especially intends for the time when they are living as dependents in the home, being trained in all the basics of life and faith) is a gift from God and is to be used to bring them to maturity.

It should also give us caution in assuming the permanence of desires, dreams, affections and decisions of children. Nevertheless, should the young person desire to pursue baptism in the normal course set out by the church, we will examine them on a case-by-case basis, with the involvement of the parents.

In the event of young persons from non-Christian families coming to the church for an extended period of time, professing faith and giving evidence of the reality thereof, requests for baptism and membership would be considered without the involvement of the parents. While all the previous comments on the nature of immaturity still pertain, the fact that such a young person would be doing so despite

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indifference, or even opposition from their parents would or could be evidence for the reality of their conversion.

Nothing in this statement should be construed as casting doubt about the legitimacy of the baptism of any among us, regardless of how young they were when they were baptized. Because they have continued in the faith into their adult years we assume the legitimacy of their initial profession made at baptism. The question we are concerned with here is looking forward, not backward. To put it another way, we are raising the question about how many people have been baptized at this church in the past as younger people and children who went on to give no evidence of ever having been savingly converted, and what damage was done to them, and to the witness of the gospel through the church's premature baptism of them.

It is our judgment that while there is some danger of discouragement on the part of those children who do give some good evidence of being converted and yet are not baptized and welcomed into communicant membership in the church, through good teaching in the home, and through the loving inclusion of the families in the church as we currently do, that danger is small. There is, however, we believe, a greater danger of deception on the part of many who could be wrongly baptized at an age in which people are more liable to make decisions which are sincere, but ill-founded and too often short-lived.

Two other notes in conclusion. First, we realize that this issue is an issue of great emotion for some, and we in no way are trying to lead anyone to disobey their conscience on this matter; we simply are trying to inform and educate our consciences from the Scriptural necessity of a credible profession of faith for baptism.

Second, while it is not generally known among American evangelicals today, the practice of baptizing pre-teenage children is of recent development (largely early 20th century) and of limited geography (largely limited to the United States, and places where American evangelicals have exercised great influence). Baptists in the past were known for waiting to baptize until the believers were adults. Baptist Christians around the world are still much more cautious than modern American Christians, often waiting in Europe, Africa and Asia to baptize until children are grown and are in their 20's.