

## **FBC Ministries, Policy Manual**

### **Membership Agreement**

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church member and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them. *Please read the following sections and initial your agreement.*

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## **A. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES (THE BIBLE)**

We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God, that it was written by men who were divinely and uniquely inspired and that it was without error in its original writing. It is complete, absolutely trustworthy, and has supreme authority in all matters of Christian faith and conduct (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20, 21; John 16:12-13; Revelation 22:18-19).

### **THE GODHEAD**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and with the same attributes and perfection.

#### **God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from the penalty of sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (John 3:35; John 5:26; John 6:46; John 10:29-30; Matthew 11:27).

#### **God The Son - Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God. We believe that in His mortal life He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. Becoming a man without ceasing to be God, He lived a sinless life and accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross, a vicarious sacrifice for our sins. We believe in His bodily resurrection from the grave and that He ascended into heaven where He is now exalted on the right hand of God the Father, interceding for us as our great high priest. We believe in His personal, imminent, physical return to rapture His church, and His subsequent return to the earth with His saints to establish His millennial Kingdom (Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 1:18-25; I Peter 2:24; John 3:16; Luke 24:1-53; Hebrews 4:14-16; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

## **God the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He regenerates, sanctifies and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ, indwelling and sealing them until the day of redemption. He is the Divine Teacher, who guides us into all truth, and by His filling He strengthens us (John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13, 14).

## **THE NATURE OF MAN**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin, man fell, thereby inheriting a sinful nature and becoming alienated from God. This resulted in not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God. By choice we sin; and, of ourselves, we are unable to remedy our lost condition (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:10; Romans 5:12; John 3:5).

## **SALVATION**

1. Salvation is by grace alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are saved and fully justified before their faith ever produces a righteous work (Ephesians 2:8-10).

2. The natural man (Romans 3:23) is spiritually dead and cannot earn salvation or favor with God (Romans 8:7-9).

3. Salvation is all God's work. Those who believe are saved utterly apart from any effort on their own (Romans 10:9-13; I Timothy 1:15-16; Titus 3:5). Eternal life is a gift of God (Romans 6:23).

4. Salvation is brought about by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God. The lost person is convicted of his sin and is convinced of his need of Jesus Christ, the Savior, to save him from sin (John 16:8-9; Acts 2:36-37; Romans 1:16-17; I Peter 1:23).

5. The natural man is called by God to a single act of repentance and believing. Repentance is a change of mind, turning to Christ from sin, trusting and believing in Him as personal Savior in regard to the Gospel message (Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; Acts 2:38, 11:18, 17:30, 20:21; Romans 2:4; II Timothy 2:25; II Peter 3:9). Both faith and repentance are a gift from God.

6. The object of faith is Christ Himself, and trusting Him begins the process of Christ changing a believers life (John 3:16; II Corinthians 5:15, 17).

- Obedience to Christ's Word is a demonstration of salvation (I John 2:3-6).

- Salvation includes a transformation of the inner person (Galatians 2:20).

- The believer receives a new nature (Romans 6:6). A continued life-style of willful sin is not consistent with a person who trusts Christ (I John 3:9-10).

7. Jesus is Lord of all and faith in Him leads to a yielding of oneself to Christ (Romans 6:12-13, 6:17-18, 10:9-10, 12:1-2).

8. Believers are kept by the power of God (John 10:28-29; I Peter 1:3-5).

9. Believers stumble and fall, but persevere in the faith (I Corinthians 1:8) and will be restored to fellowship by confession of sin (I John 1:9).

10. Assurance of Salvation is based on the promises of God (I Peter 1:23; I John 5:11-12).

## **THE CHURCH**

We believe that the universal church of Christ is a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the Head, and of which all regenerated people are members. We believe that the local church is a company of believers in Jesus Christ who have shared their profession of faith, and voluntarily associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were committed to the local church for perpetual observance, and that God laid upon the church the task of proclaiming to a lost world the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Colossians 1:18; I Peter 2:5; Matthew 28:18-20).

We believe the church has two ordinances:

1. Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, symbolizing the believer's previous experience of the new birth through faith and his union in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as set forth in Romans 6:3-11.

2. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial to His atoning sacrifice. In the observance of this Supper, believers remember Him: they show forth His death until He comes, and they function as worshipping priests before God (Luke 22:14-20; I Corinthians 11:23-36).

We believe the local church is independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority, and therefore church and state must be kept separate, each having different functions (Luke 20:19-26; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1).

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives each believer one or more spiritual gifts and that Christ, our Risen Head, has especially set apart the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers in order to help the saints in their work of service and to build up the body of Christ.

We believe that as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority established, the need for miraculous signs has diminished and they are not now necessary to validate our faith or to authenticate the Scriptures (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 1:22; I Corinthians 12:11-14; I Corinthians 12:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; Mark 16:17-18).

We believe in the power of prayer. God does hear and answer the prayer of faith in accordance with His sovereign will (John 15:7; I John 14, 15).

## **THE ETERNAL STATE**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; John 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13).

We believe that the soul of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss, they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:1-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15).

We believe that Satan is real, the author of sin and the cause of man's fall. We believe 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; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

*"You therefore, beloved, since you know these things before hand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. AMEN."*

(II Peter 3:17-18 - NKJV)

## **COVENANT**

We believe that we have been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this local church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through our community and all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, slander and excessive anger, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the principles of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We agree that if we move from this geographical area, we will as soon as possible unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

**Initial here that you agree with the Statement of Faith.**

## **B. MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY POLICY**

**PURPOSE** This policy statement is the First Baptist Church of Medford, Inc. (FBC) position in regard to 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. (Genesis 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. (Genesis 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 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 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. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of FBC as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to FBC members and community, it is imperative that all persons employed by FBC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 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; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 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 FBC.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial here that you agree with the Marriage, Gender and Sexuality Policy.**

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## **C. STATEMENT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (I Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (I Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1)

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Elder Council and is to follow the biblical pattern

as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Elder Council is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Elder Council short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry.) The Elder Council, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial here that you agree with the Statement of Church Discipline.**

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## **D. STATEMENT ON MEDIATION**

Members of FBC agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. 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 mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion.

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial here that you agree with the Statement of Mediation.**

## **E. 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)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial here that you agree with the Statement on Life.**

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## **F. 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 FBC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Council is FBC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial here that you agree with the Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct.**

*I have reviewed the statements A through F above as indicated by my initials before each of them, and agree to be governed by all the provisions herein.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Adopted by the FBC Elder Council November 16, 2015