

# **Mt. Freedom Baptist Church Statement of Basic Belief**

## **(Amended 9/18/22)**

Our church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 unless stated below with exception.

### **The Bible**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the very Word of God written by human authors under the direction of God's Spirit. God's Word is perfect, complete, and wholly without error. God has given us His Word as the authoritative foundation for all our beliefs and conduct.

### **God**

We worship the only one true living God who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. The three persons of our God are coequal facets of the One living God, who created and rules sovereignly over all things as detailed in Genesis 1 & 2. God is eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and always present everywhere. God is perfectly holy – unable and unwilling to abide with sin. God the Father is all-loving, desiring intimate fellowship with and devotion from all His creatures. He adopts as His own children all who believe the Gospel of Jesus (see below) and profess His lordship over our lives. By His Spirit, God the Father draws people to Jesus.

### **Jesus – God the Son**

Jesus the Christ is the eternal, holy Son of God. He is coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Word of God by whom God created all things. As foretold by the Biblical prophets, Jesus was conceived by God's Spirit in the womb of the Hebrew virgin Mary. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus of Nazareth dwelt and ministered among people on Earth for a time, died bodily on the cross, was resurrected in His glorified body on the third day, and is now glorified with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit just as He always was before He came to Earth in human form.

### **God's Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit of God is the agent through whom our three-in-one God interacts with His creation. He is a coequal person with God the Father and Jesus – God the Son, sharing in God's holy, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, universal presence, and nature. The Holy Spirit convicts mankind of sin, thereby drawing people to repentance and salvation through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the instant someone honestly professes faith in the Gospel, God's Holy Spirit indwells the person of the new believer and begins a work of regeneration within them. He empowers, leads, comforts, and bestows within us the spiritual gifts used by God to build His Kingdom in and through our ministries. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us is the surety of our salvation in Christ until the day of our ultimate redemption and restoration into the presence of God.

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### **Man**

God created mankind in His own perfect image with an eternal mind, soul, and body. God created man in complete innocence and endowed us with freedom of choice in all matters. By our own free will, mankind disobeyed God's command, and through this sin introduced disease, death, and all forms of evil into God's creation. Since that time, all people have been born with a sinful nature, which separates us from God. Only through God's grace can we be brought back into holy fellowship with Him.

### **Nature and Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe all people are created by God with equal worth and dignity regardless of race, gender, nationality, or any other personal attribute. We recognize that apart from Christ all of us are hopelessly sinful by our very nature, and therefore equally undeserving of God's love and redemption. Therefore, we should treat all people in the same manner that we ourselves would wish to be treated – with the same Christ-like love that Jesus demonstrated for us all through His sacrificial death on the cross. We believe our earthly life begins at conception and continues until our divinely appointed time of death. We also affirm, at conception, God assigns each person exactly one of two immutable genders – male or female. We therefore abhor and eschew both aborting pregnancy and euthanasia of anyone for any reason. We therefore reject any and all forms of gender reassignment as these acts defy God's intent.

### **Marriage**

God has ordained and condones only one form of marriage – between exactly one man and exactly one woman in a monogamous, life-long marriage covenant. God approves and encourages intimate sexual behavior only within the confines of such a marriage covenant.

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### **The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

1. God created mankind in perfection for the purpose of loving, worshiping, and sharing fellowship with Him.
2. When mankind rebelled against God by our own free will, the curse of our sin separated us from God and brought death into God's creation.
3. God in His sovereignty made a way for mankind to be redeemed out of death in our sins and restored into fellowship with God – The Gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. At the God-ordained time and place, God Himself came to dwell among people in the form of the man – Jesus of Nazareth.
5. Since Jesus was conceived by God's Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, He was born as a person without the sinful nature into which all other people are born (including Mary herself).
6. Jesus of Nazareth lived His earthly life wholly without sin, thus enabling Him to become the perfectly sinless sacrifice required by God to restore mankind into fellowship with Him.
7. Jesus willingly shed His own blood and allowed Himself to be crucified so that He could take upon Himself the righteous judgement of death for the sins of all mankind.
8. Jesus died physically on His cross, becoming Himself the required redeeming sacrifice for mankind's sins.
9. After His crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb until His bodily resurrection by the power of God's Spirit on the third day.
10. Following His resurrection, Jesus appeared a number of times to His disciples in His glorified body as recorded in the Bible's gospel accounts.
11. Afterward Jesus ascended into Heaven where He has been restored to the full glory, He has shared with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit since before the beginning of creation.
12. Now seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus serves as our mediator and reconciler between God and man.
13. Jesus promised in His Word that He will return someday to judge, renew, and rule eternally over His restored creation.
14. During His earthly ministry, Jesus promised that anyone who truly believes and professes this Gospel may share in His resurrection out of death, and His eternal glorification in the very presence of God.

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### **Salvation in Christ**

By His sacrificial death and resurrection, Jesus redeems sinful mankind out of death. He who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for every believer, offers this salvation to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Our salvation in Christ consists of several factors:

1. Regeneration – our spiritual rebirth in the moment we first confess our faith in Jesus
2. Justification – God’s merciful forgiveness of our sins through Jesus’ substitutionary atonement on the cross
3. Sanctification – the work of the Holy Spirit in each believer perfecting us into the very image of Jesus the Son
4. Glorification – Our final and eternal redemption into the heavenly presence of God.

### **The Church**

As part of the Body of Christ, this local church body voluntarily bands itself together as an autonomous group of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation with lost mankind.

Jesus commanded two ordinances for His Church – baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Baptism – In obedience to the urging of the Holy Spirit, believers are immersed in water as a symbolic gesture displaying our faith in the crucified, buried, and resurrected Savior who put to death sin, buried the old life, and resurrected the believer to walk with Jesus as a new creation. Jesus Himself was baptized as our model, and just before He ascended back to His Father, He also commanded His disciples to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Christian baptism is an outward testimony of the inward change in a new believer’s heart by the indwelling of God’s Spirit. Therefore, we do not condone baptism of anyone unable or unwilling to profess belief in Jesus’ Gospel and request baptism for themselves (for example, infant baptism, proxy baptism, or “last rights”). Although we believe all Christian believers should be baptized in accordance with the ordinance of our Lord Jesus as a public declaration of our faith in His Gospel, we do not consider baptism a requirement for salvation in Christ.

The Lord’s Supper – Observance of the Lord’s Supper is a public act of obedience wherein every believer partakes in the bread and the fruit of the vine. The elements of this communion symbolically represent but aren’t actually transformed into Jesus body and blood at the Lord’s Supper. The bread and the cup remind us of Jesus’ one-time, atoning and redemptive, sacrifice on the cross. By observing the Lord’s Supper, we publicly announce to the world around us the full message of the Gospel; – that belief in Jesus is the only way of salvation. We also participate in the Lord’s Supper with eager

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anticipation of Christ's return as He finalizes the redemptive plans of God and brings us into the full glory of His heavenly presence.

We disagree with the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message (2000) section VII statement that baptism is a pre-requisite to partaking of the Lord's Supper. We believe all true, regenerated believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ should partake of the Lord's Supper by their own choice in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Since no person can truly know the heart of another, only God and the believers themselves can or should determine who may partake in the Lord's Supper.