

Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

The Essentials of What We Believe

Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church ascribes to the below stated **Articles of Faith**. All those who identify with our church family and decide to serve as a group leader, host, or facilitator must be in full agreement with these essential Christian beliefs.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

(The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. ascribes to these **Articles of Faith**)

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. **(References: 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Romans 2:12)**

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe, infinite in holiness and all other perfections to whom we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. He is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. **(References: John 4:24; Psalms 147:5; Exodus 15:11)**

III. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created by the special act of God, as recorded in Genesis. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). He was created in the state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and in bondage to sin, are under condemnation, and as soon as he is capable of moral action, becomes an actual transgressor. **(References: Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:6,24; Romans 5:19)**

IV. THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatory office of the Son of God, who by the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary and took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience and made atonement for our sins by His death. Being risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in his person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a compassionate and all sufficient Savior. **(References: Ephesians 2:8; John 3:16; Philippians 2:6-7; Isaiah 42:2)**

V. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of righteousness of all sinners who believe in Christ. This blessing is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but through the redemption that is in and through Jesus Christ. It brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other needed blessing. **(References: John 1:16; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:1-2)**

VI. THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

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We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel. It is the duty of all to accept them by penitent and obedient faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner except his own voluntary refusal to accept Jesus Christ as Teacher, Savior, and Lord. **(References: Isaiah 55:1; Romans 16:25-26; John 5:40)**

VII. THE GRACE IN REGENERATION

We believe that regeneration or the new birth is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit, whereby we become partakers of the divine nature and a holy disposition is given, leading to the love and practice of righteousness. It is a work of God's free grace conditioned upon faith in Christ and made manifest by the fruit that we bring forth to the glory of God. **(References: John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:8)**

VIII. REPENTANCE AND 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 gift, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, and supplication of mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior. **(References: Mark 1:15; John 16:8; Luke 18:13)**

IX. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe that election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners. It is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man and in no way interferes with the salvation of any individual. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. It encourages the use of means in the highest degree. **(References: 2 Timothy 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Exodus 33:18-19)**

X. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer. **(References: 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Proverbs 4:18; 1 John 2:29)**

XI. THE PERSERVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. **(References: John 8:17; 1 John 2:19; Romans 8:28)**

XII. THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is a holy, just, and good; and that inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church. **(References: Romans 3:31; Romans 7:12; Romans 8:2-4)**

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XIII. A GOSPEL CHURCH

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 gift, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only Scripture officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the epistles of Timothy and Titus. **(References: I Corinthians 1:1-13; Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:20)**

XIV. THE BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior with its effect in the 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 are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ-preceded always by solemn self-examination. **(References: Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4; Matthew 28:19)**

XV. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for the rest that remaineth for the people of God. **(References: Acts 20:7; Exodus 20:8; Revelation 1:10)**

XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of kings of the earth. **(References: Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29)**

XVII. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in His sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and are under condemnation. This distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgment when final and everlasting awards are made to all men. **(References: Romans 1:17; Malachi 3:18; 1 John 2:29)**

XVIII. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We believe that Christianity is the religion of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is therefore a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. An adequate system of school is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with this the liberal support of the churches. **(References: Proverb 10:14; John 8:32; 2 Timothy 2:15)**

XIX. SOCIAL SERVICE

We believe that every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ regnant in his own life and in human society; to oppose in the Spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and

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vice; to provide for the orphaned, the aged, the helpless, and the sick; to seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love; to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love with compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. All means and methods used in social service for the amelioration of society and the establishment of righteous among men must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. **(References: Matthew 25:35-36; James 1:27; Acts 11:29)**

XX. STEWARDSHIP

We believe that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. We have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in our possessions. We are therefore under obligation to serve Him with our time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to us to use for the glory of God and helping others. Christians should cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally contribute of their means to advancing the Redeemer's cause on earth. **(References: 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew 16:24)**

XXI. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

We believe that it is the duty of every Christian man and woman, and the duty of every church of Christ to seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all resets thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life. 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 methods sanctioned by the Gospel of Christ. **(References: Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 8:30-35)**

XXII. THE RESURRECTION

We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus rose from the dead. His grave was emptied to its contents. He appeared to the disciples after His resurrection in many convincing manifestations. He now exists in His glorified body at God's right hand. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. The bodies of the righteous will confirm to the glorious spiritual body of Jesus. **(References: Matthew 28:1-6; Luke 24:1-7; Mark 16:1-7)**

XXIII. THE RETURN OF THE LORD

We believe that the New Testament teaches in many places that visible and personal return of Jesus to this earth. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you in heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The time is coming is not revealed. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angles in heaven, but may Father only" (Matt. 24:36). It is the duty of all believers to live in readiness for His coming and by diligence in good works to make manifest to all men the reality and power to their hope in Christ. **(References: Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11-16; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12)**

XXIV. THE WORLD TO COME

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 judged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven and hell, on principles of righteousness. **(References: 1 Peter 4:7; Acts 24:15; Matthew 25:31-46)**