

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
5050 Middlebranch Avenue NE
Canton, OH

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THE COVENANT OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Having been brought by the sovereign grace of God to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we publicly declare our reliance upon and allegiance to Him. With joy, we covenant together to worship Him and to live in Christian love for the glory of Christ within His body, the church. We do now, in the presence of the triune God and before angels and men commit ourselves to walk worthy of His calling and seek His enablement for the fulfilling of this covenant.

We covenant together to uphold the public worship of God in accordance with His Word: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, honoring the preaching of the Word, submitting to Christ's ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and giving ourselves faithfully to corporate prayer. We agree to contribute freely and cheerfully of our income, as God has graciously prospered us, for the continuing of an edifying and evangelistic ministry among us, for the support of the needy, and for the spread of the gospel throughout the world. We will serve in the ministries of this church by discovering and practicing our spiritual gifts and God-given talents.

In reliance upon the grace of our Living God, we determine to exercise a mutual care and watchfulness for one another to fulfill the law of Christ. We will strive for the good of this whole church to protect and promote the spiritual unity of this church and to turn away from a divisive spirit. We will promote the knowledge of the truth which is in accordance with godliness, by instructing, encouraging and correcting one another in a spirit of meekness, and praying for one another according to the will of God. Within our homes, we will commit to personal and family worship, diligently instructing and training those entrusted to our care in Biblical doctrine and conduct.

As "the salt of the earth", we will strive to live a Spirit-filled and controlled life and remove ourselves from ungodly practices and passions that hinder pure worship of a Holy God and bind us again to the "old nature of sin". We further commit to forsake personal liberties that may hinder the gospel or cause another to stumble. We shall, in fear of God, be instead zealous for good deeds and the goal of a clear

conscience before God and man, so as not bring any reproach upon the name of our Savior or His Body the Church. It is our desire to enjoy our God by glorifying Him and spreading His gospel to everyone.

Should we remove ourselves from this church, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church of like faith and practice where we can continue to carry out the spirit of this covenant.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Grace Baptist Church

Canton, Ohio

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men and, therefore, has truth without any error in its content. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

(II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19:21)

II. OF THE TRUE GOD

A. **God the Father.** We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God - an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressively glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. That in the unity of the godhead, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Exodus 20:2-3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; I John 5:7)

B **God the Son.** We believe in the absolute Deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that He was divine as no other man can be, being very God of very God, existing from all eternity coequal with the Father and the Spirit; that He never ceased to be God for one instant and that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His Deity; that as man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary. (John 1:1-2, I John 5:20; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-38)

- c. **God the Spirit.** We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; and that He seals, endows, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God. (John 14:16-17; Gen. 1:1-3; Mark 1:8; Luke 1:35; Matt. 28:19; John 16:8-11; John 1:33; Eph. 1:13; Heb. 9:14; Acts 5:30-32; Acts 11:16; Rom. 8:14,16,26,27; John 14:26; John 3:5-6; Luke 24:49)

III. OF THE DEVIL OR SATAN

We believe in the personality of Satan that he is the unholy god of this age, and the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Matt. 4:1-3; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10; Job 1:6-7)

IV. OF THE CREATION

We believe that God created the heaven and the earth, including all life "each after its own kind" by direct act, and not by the process of evolution. (Genesis 1 and 2; Colossians. 1:16-17; John 1:3)

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth by His verbal command in 6 literal days as the Scriptures states. (Genesis 1-2)

We believe that all mankind was made in the Image of God, both male and female. Both were created as Image bearers of God and to work in a perfect, complementary way. (Genesis 1-2)

We believe that from the beginning God designed marriage as a life long covenant between one man and one woman which represents the relationship between Christ and His Church. (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:3-6; Ephesians 5:22-32)

V. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man in the person of the first Adam, was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and, therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

(Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:10-19; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 3:10-19)

We believe that sin not only separates us from God but also distorts God's good gifts to mankind. While sexuality is a gift of God within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman, all practice of sexuality outside of this covenant is an offense to God and brings judgment on those involved. (Hebrews 13:4; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 1:26-32; Leviticus 20:13)

VI. OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son. (Gen. 3:15; Is.7:14; Matt. :18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14.)

VII. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

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 vicarious atonement for our sins. That His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust; Christ the Lord, bearing our sin in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior. (Eph. 2:8; I John 4:10; Rom. 3:24; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Heb. 2:11; Is. 53:4-7)

VIII. OF SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and newness of life. (John 3:3; II Cor. 5:17; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Eph. 2:1,5; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:13; John 3:8)

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation, and that those who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ through eternity. (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:1; Acts 16:31; Heb. 11:6; I John 5:11-13; John 10:28-29; Phil. 1:6)

IX. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification:

- A. That justification included the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness.
- B. That it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed to us.
(Acts 13:39; Is. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; 5:9; 4:25; 5:1)

X. OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Defined - We believe that a local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant of 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 officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

Mission & Associations: We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of

self-government free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation on all matters of membership, of policy of government, of discipline, of benevolence, and that the will of the local church is final.

Gifts of each member: God has given each redeemed member gifts to actively use in the church. We believe that, with the completing of the canon of Scripture, the sign gifts have ceased in their active function in the body of Christ. However, God is sovereign and all powerful and able to divinely intervene as He deems best to make His name & the Gospel known. (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-12; I Tim. 3:1-7; I Cor. 13:8-13)

Men & Women in the Church : We believe that both male and female are equal before Christ in regards to the Gospel, responsibility in Kingdom ministry, and yet there is a clear distinction in roles and physical design of males and females.

We believe the Bible teaches a Complementarian view of Church ministry function of men and women, therefore the offices of Pastor and deacon are to be held by Biblically qualified men. (I Cor. 11:1-16; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:1-13; Gal. 3:26-28)

XI. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection of the privileges of a church relation. We believe the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded by solemn self-examination. (Acts 8:36-39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 3:16)

XII. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only by faith alone are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God; that they are truly righteous in His esteem, while all

such as continue in unrepentance and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and that this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Mal. 3:18; Gen. 8:23; Rom. 6:17-18; I John 5:19; Rom. 7:6, 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21)

XIII. OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the earth. (Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18)

XIV. OF THE RESURRECTION, PERSONAL, VISIBLE, PRE-MILLENIAL RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We further believe that Jesus Christ will rapture out of the earth all believers who have lived and are yet alive since His resurrection. The rapture will be followed by a 7 year Tribulation period of Judgment upon the Earth, its leaders, and Satan. (The OT saints will be bodily resurrected just before Christ's bodily return to the earth. Daniel 12:1-2) Finally, Christ will return in His Second Coming as the armies of earth gather to fight Him, but will face ultimate and complete defeat in an instant. (Rev. 19:11-20:1-3) We believe that Jesus Christ will bodily return to the Earth as King of Kings and establish a complete perfect Millennial Reign upon the Earth. Following this 1000 year reign, Satan will be loosed for a time for one final rebellion, after which God will completely judge all who are not redeemed by Christ and set up an Eternal New Heaven and New Earth. (Matt. 24; 25:31-46; I Thess. 4:13-5:3; 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 4-22)

We would identify ourselves as believing that the Scriptures literally teach a Pre-Tribulational, Pre-Millennial Dispensational unfolding of past, present and future redemption work of the Godhead in His Creation.