

STATEMENT OF FAITH

THIRD AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

TOGETHER WITH THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES,

We believe in one GOD THE FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us humans and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one Holy Universal and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

FURTHERMORE,

Concerning the Scriptures

We believe that the Bible, specifically the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, is the written Word of God; that it 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 only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

Concerning the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, a personal and intelligent Spirit, whose name is Yahweh, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, infinite in all perfections, 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 without division of nature, essence, or being; yet each having distinct personal attributes and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Concerning Divine Providence

We believe that God, from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any way to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

Concerning the Fall of Man

We believe that God created Man in his own image, and originally free from sin; but through the temptation of Satan, Man voluntarily transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, having inherited a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and his law, and are under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

Concerning Election

We believe that Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life, not because of foreseen merit in them, but because of His mere mercy in Christ, in consequence of which they are called, justified, and glorified; that being perfectly consistent with the free will of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

Concerning the Mediator

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, and is accomplished through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; who is the divinely appointed Mediator between God and man; who without sin took upon Himself human nature and perfectly fulfilled the divine law; who by his death upon the cross made a full atonement for the sins of His people; and who rose from the dead and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He now sits enthroned, ever living to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church, and is therefore in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

Concerning Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins, spiritually and savingly enlightening their minds to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature so that they voluntarily love and practice holiness; that it is a work of God's free and special grace alone; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

Concerning 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; that Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being deeply convinced by the Holy Spirit of his guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, turns to God with unfeigned contrition, humbles himself with godly sorrow, and commits to walk before God so as to please Him in all things; and that saving Faith is also an evangelical grace, whereby a person believes, on God's authority, whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ, accepting, relying, and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life.

Concerning Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to those who believe in Him is Justification; that Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners wherein He removes our guilt and reconciles us to Himself; that it is bestowed through faith alone in Jesus Christ, not in consideration of anything wrought in us or done by us, but solely on account of His substitutionary death on the cross, and on the basis of His perfect righteousness, which is freely imputed to us by God; and that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

Concerning the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Concerning 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 it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on for the duration of life 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, the communion of the saints, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

Concerning the Perseverance of the Saints

We believe that those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to 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 though they may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Concerning the Church

We believe that Christians are to associate themselves into particular churches, according to Christ's commandment; that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, bound together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and exercising the various gifts given them by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church; that its primary duties are the reading and preaching of God's Word, the right administration of Christ's ordinances, and the faithful exercise of discipline over its members; and that its only scriptural officers are Elders or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Concerning Baptism

We believe that Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that it is to be done by immersion to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that its only proper subjects are those who do actually profess repentance towards God, and faith in and obedience to the Lord Jesus; and that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership, and to the Lord's Supper.

Concerning the Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be observed by his churches until the end of the world; that it is to be observed by the eating of bread and the drinking of the cup; and that it is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge, and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.

Concerning the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God.

Concerning Liberty of Conscience

We believe that God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His word, or not contained in it. We also 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 Prince of the kings of the earth.

Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked

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

Concerning the Resurrection and the World To Come

We believe that death is not the end; that though the bodies of men after death return to dust, their spirits live on, the righteous departing immediately to be with the Lord, and the wicked to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead, both righteous and wicked, from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place which will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, the wicked being adjudged to everlasting conscious punishment, and the righteous to everlasting life and joy.