

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Emmanuel Baptist Church of South Haven

1. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit controlled men. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Bible, therefore, has truth without admixture of error for its matter; and it reveals the principles by which God will judge humanity, and therefore is and shall remain the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried. We believe God has kept that promise by preserving His infallible Word in the traditional Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and that the Authorized Version (KJV) is an accurate English translation of the preserved Word of God. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the church. *II Peter 1:19-21; II Tim. 3:16,17; Prov. 30:5,6*

2. Of Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. *Gen. 1:28; I Cor. 9:17; II Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6*

3. Of the True God

We believe there is only one living and true God, infinite in every excellence and inexpressibly glorious in holiness. We believe that God is Spirit indivisible, yet a Godhead existing in three personal distinction -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- one in substance and equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. *Ex. 20:2,3; I Cor. 3:6; I John 5:7*. 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 co-equal 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 a true 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 1:26-28*. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, bears witness of the truth, is the Agent of the New Birth, and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God. *II Cor. 13:14; John 14:16, 17; Romans 8:14-27*. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of

our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. *I Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22*

4. Of the Devil, or Satan

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, author of all the powers of darkness and sin, 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*

5. Of the Creation

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth in six literal, 24-hour periods, including all life, "each after its own kind," by direct act and not by the process of evolution. We further reject the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. *Gen. 1,2; Col. 1:16, 17; John 1:3*

6. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man 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 are therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. *Gen. 3:1-6; 3:24; Rom. 1:18, 32; 5:10-19*

7. Of the Atonement or Way of Salvation

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who according to the will of the Father, assumed our nature without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, by His death made a full payment for our sins, arose from the dead bodily for our justification, is now presently seated at the Father's right hand, and that uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and all-sufficient Saviour. *Eph. 2:5; John 3:16; Phil. 2:6, 7; Isa. 53:4, 5; Rom. 4:25; Heb. 7:25*

8. Of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God according to which He graciously saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man 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 and trust in God; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; and that it is the foundation of our Christian assurance. *Rom. 8:30; II Tim. 1:8, 9; 2:10; I Thess. 4:10; II Thess. 2:13, 14; II Peter 1:10*

9. Of Repentance

We believe the Scriptures teach that Repentance is a personal act, prompted by the Holy Spirit and consists in a godly sorrow for sin, as offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; that it is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon, also by sincere hatred for sin, and persistent turning away from and abandonment of all that is evil and unholy. *Acts 20:21; II Cor. 7:2; Isa. 4:7*

10. **Of Regeneration**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Regeneration, or the New Birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God, the evidence being found in the fruits of righteousness. *Titus 3:5; John 1:13; 3:13; I Peter 1:23; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; I John 2:29*

11. **Of Faith**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as its Sacrifice and Saviour. It is an assent of the mind and a consent of the heart, consisting of belief and trust, the testimony of God is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation, that by it the believer is brought into vital relations with God, is freely justified, and lives as seeing Him who is invisible. *Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9, 10; Heb. 12:2; Gal. 3:26*

12. **Of Justification**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life which is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, by virtue of which His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; 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. *Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 5:1, 9; 8:1*

13. **Of Adoption**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Adoption is a gracious act by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, accepts believers to the estate and condition of Children, by the new and spiritual birth; sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of God entitled to all the rights, privileges, and promises of children; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, to the heritage of the saints on earth, and inheritance reserved in heaven for them. *Rom. 8:15; Heb. 12:7; I Peter 1:3, 4*

14. **Of Sanctification**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is both positional and progressive. Positionally, God has set apart all those who believe on His Son Jesus Christ, calling them "saints" and "holy" from the moment of believing. Progressively, God is making us partakers of His holiness, according to His word; that this process is begun in regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means -- especially the Word of God, prayer, self-examination, self-denial, and in the practice of all godly exercises and duties. *Heb. 10:10; John 17:17; I Tim. 4:7; Eph. 5:25, 26*

15. **Of the Preservation of the Saints**

We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not

utterly fall away and finally perish, but will be kept to the end by the power of God; that those so kept manifest a persevering attachment for Christ which is the grand mark of distinction between them and superficial professors. *Phil. 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; I Peter 1:5; Jude 24; I John 2:19*

16. **Of the Righteous and the Wicked**

We believe that there is a radical, essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence 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. 18:23, Rom. 6:17, 18:23; I John 5:19; Luke 6:25; 16:19-31; Rom. 7:6*

17. **Of the Church**

We believe that the Church Universal is a New Testament institution, unknown to the Old Testament prophets, established by Jesus Christ who is its sole Head, revealed through the Apostles, empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit composed of believers in Jesus Christ as Saviour, both Jew and Gentile, called out from the world and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, His "body" for service and His "Bride" for glory, and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the rapture. *Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:8; 2:1-13, 41-47; 15:14; Rom. 16:26; I Cor. 12:12-28; I Thess. 4:13-18.* We believe that the Church Universal is manifest through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, governed by His laws in the absolute right of self-government, directed by the Holy Spirit, is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence, the will of the local church is final. *Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 1:2; 6:4; 7:17; 11:16; I Tim. 3:1-15*

18. **Of the Ordinances**

We believe that Christian Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. *Acts 8:26-39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 11:23-28*

19. **Of the Lord's Day Worship**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Christians' day of public worship; that it commemorates the resurrection of the Lord and should be used to His glory in the church. *Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2*

20. **Of Separation**

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasure, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances, piercings, and bodily markings is commanded by God. *Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; II Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11*

21. Of Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; that there should be definite separation of church and state; 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 Prince of the kings of the earth. *I Peter 2:13-14; Heb. 13:17; Eph. 5:22-24; Rom. 13:1-7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21, 22; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20; 23:5; Dan. 3:17, 18*

22. Of Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. *Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4*. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. *Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23*

23. Of Family Relationships

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. *Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12*. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. *Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7*

24. Of Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. *Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6*

25. **Of Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. *Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44*

26. **Of Euthanasia**

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. *Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28*

27. **Of Love**

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. *Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; II Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I John 3:17-18*

28. **Of Lawsuits Between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. *I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32*

29. **Of Missions**

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. *Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:20*

30. **Of Giving**

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support his local church. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that

a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithes or offerings once the gift has been made. *Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17*

31. **Of Last Things**

We believe the Scriptures teach this age of the Church will be followed in sequence by the following: the imminent return in the air of the Lord Jesus Christ to resurrect the righteous dead and rapture the righteous living, the Great Tribulation over the whole world under the rule of the "Man of Sin," his doom at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lords of lords; the judgment of the nations and the binding of Satan, the millennial reign of Christ, personal and visible over the whole earth, the loosing of Satan, rebellion of men and the purging of the earth by fire, the last judgment, the Great White Throne judgment of all the unbelieving and unrighteous dead who will be resurrected for this purpose, the eternal ages ushered in with Heaven and Hell as the only two abiding destinations for the human race. *I Thess. 4:14-17; I Cor. 15:51-53; Matt. 24:21, 22; 25:31-46; II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1-12; Rev. 13:1-18; 19:11, 20; 20:1-10; 21:1-8; I Peter 3:4-13; Isa. 2:1-9; Micah 4:1-5*

"Even so, Come, Lord Jesus" - Revelation 22:20