



WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
Articles of Faith and Covenant—a
Portion of our Constitution and By-
Laws Adopted December 9, 2007

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith of this church shall be as delineated in The Articles of Faith of Westside Baptist Church which follow:

Articles of Faith of Westside Baptist Church

We, the members of Westside Baptist Church of Georgetown Township, Michigan, do enact and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily subscribe and submit ourselves. These Articles do not exhaust all that we must adhere to in terms of faith and practice, but they serve to lay out essential biblical truths around which we will fellowship as this local church. If any of the statements made in these Articles are found to contradict Scriptural truth, then they must be amended to more properly agree with Scripture, by a church vote as delineated in the Constitution and By-Laws of Westside Baptist Church.

1. Bible

We believe that the words of Scripture are inspired (breathed out) by God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21) and that all of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written, are without error (John 10:35; 17:17) and the final authority on all matters of faith and practice (1 Tim 3:14-15).

2. Trinity

We believe that the one true God exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are equal in essence, yet distinct in personality (Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14). We believe in the original direct creation of the universe, a voluntary act of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit whereby, for God's own glory and according to God's eternal purpose and counsel, in six consecutive, successive solar days, God gave existence to all things in distinction from Himself. We oppose all forms of the evolutionary hypothesis of origins, whether theistic or atheistic. (Gen 1 – 2; Exod 20:11; Ps 19:1 – 6; 33:6, 9; 90:2; Isa 40:28; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 11:3; Rev 4:9 – 11).

3. God the Father

We believe that God the Father is the First Person of the eternal Trinity, being the Father because of His personal relationship to the Son (2 John 3), whom He sent into the world (1 John 4:10), and Who, together with the Son, sent the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26). The Father is the ultimate source of all things (1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9), the sustainer of all things (Neh 9:6; Acts 17:25,28), and the controller of all things (Ps 103:19; 148:8). He enters into a Fatherhood relationship with believers spiritually through the new birth (John 1:12), indwells believers (John 14:23), forgives their sins (1 John 1:9), and answers their prayers (John 16:23).

4. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of God, that He is both God and man, possessing two natures within one person (John 1:1,14; Heb 1:8; 1 Tim 2:5). We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:21; Lu 1:35) and born of a virgin (Matt 1:18-25). We believe that Jesus Christ died as a sinless substitute, capable of paying the penalty for mankind's sin (1 John 2:2), and effectively propitiating God for all

believers, was buried, rose again from the dead (1 Cor 15:3-4), and is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for believers (Heb 7:24-25; 1 Tim 2:5).

5. Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is an eternal and divine person (Acts 5:3-4; Heb 9:14), sent from the Father to convict the world of sin (John, 16:8-11), bear witness to Jesus Christ (John 15:26; 16:14-15), impart new life to those who put their faith in Christ (Titus 3:5), and transform believers into the image of Jesus Christ through the Word of God (2 Cor 3:18).

6. Man

We believe that God created man in His own image by a direct act on the sixth day of the creation week (Gen 1:26-31). We believe that man deliberately chose to disobey the expressed will of God and therefore fell under God's condemnation (Rom 5:12). The extent of man's depravity touches every portion of his being – mind, will and emotions (Eph 4:17-19; 1 Cor 2:14); therefore, man is completely unable to do anything to earn God's favor or contribute to his own salvation (Rom 3:20; 4:5-6; Titus 3:5).

7. Salvation

We believe that salvation is by God's grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone (Rom 3:22-24; Eph 2:8-9). Salvation was purchased by the bloody sacrificial death of Christ upon the cross (Rom 3:25), is applied to individuals by the work of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God (John 16:8-11; 1 Pet 1:23) and is received by repentance (Acts 20:21) and faith in the resurrected Son of God (Rom 10:9-10). We believe that when a person puts trust in Christ, they do so because of the sovereign work of God to save His elect (Jn 6:44, Acts 13:48; 16:14). We believe that God makes secure and guarantees the final salvation of every true believer (John 10:27-30; Rom 8:35-39), and that genuine believers must and will persevere in their faith until they meet the Lord (1 Cor 15:2; Col 1:23).

8. Sanctification

We believe that the will of God for every believer is to be made holy and like Jesus Christ (1 Thes 4:3; Rom 8:29). At the moment of salvation the believer receives a holy standing before God due to the righteousness of Christ, often referred to as positional sanctification (Heb 10:10,14). The new birth creates within every believer a new nature which is made after the likeness of God in true holiness and righteousness (Eph 4:24). There still remains in the believer unsubdued tendencies toward sin which are in constant conflict with the new nature (Gal 5:16-21). The biblical process of spiritual growth, often called progressive sanctification, requires removing the sinful patterns of the unsaved condition and replacing these with patterns of godly character (Eph 4:22-24). The Holy Spirit accomplishes these changes as the believer, by faith, yields obedience to the Word of God (Rom 6:11-13; 2 Cor 3:18) and puts to death all sinful practices (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5). The believer will ultimately be made completely holy when he enters the presence of Jesus Christ either at death or Christ's return (Phil 1:6; 3:21; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 John 3:2).

9. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that spiritual gifts are special abilities used for spiritual purposes (Rom 12:3-8). They are given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11) to every believer in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10) according to God's design (1 Cor 12:18,28) and grace (Rom 12:3,6). Spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit for use within the context of the local assembly of believers (1 Cor 12:27,28; 14:12; 1 Pet 4:10-11) and for the good of the body (1 Cor 12:7).

10. Church

We believe that the Church has both universal and local aspects. The church as the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18), is an organism composed of genuine believers in Jesus Christ, the total number of Spirit baptized believers of this dispensation regardless of location or circumstance (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:11-12). We believe that the local church is the visible expression of the body of Christ in a particular time and place (Acts 13:1; Rom 16:1,5), being an organized body of immersed believers (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:41,47), sharing a common doctrinal commitment (Acts 2:42; 2 Thess 3:6; Jude 3), observing the ordinances of baptism (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:41; 10:47-48) and the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-30; 1 Cor 11:23-32), meeting at regular and stated times (1 Cor 16:2; Heb 10:25) in order to honor God by making and maturing disciples (Matt 28:19-20) who are becoming like Jesus Christ (Col 1:28) through evangelism, edification, fellowship, and worship (Acts 2:41-47). We believe that the New Testament establishes the offices of pastor (1 Tim 3:1-7; Eph 4:11) and deacon (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13). We believe that the local church is an autonomous body solely responsible to preserve its internal unity (Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 4:2), maintain pure doctrine and practice (1 Tim 3:15; Jude 3), elect its own officers, leaders, and messengers (Acts 6:1-6; 13:2; 15:3,4,22; 1 Cor 16:3-4), settle its own internal matters (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4-5,12; 6:1-5), and determine the extent of its cooperation with other churches (Acts 15:2-32; 2 Cor 8:19). We believe that the local church is God's ordained instrument for His work and witness in this age (1 Tim 3:15).

11. Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan (1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Matt 4:11), that he is the unholy god of this age (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:3-4), the prince of all the powers of darkness (Matt 12:24; Eph 2:2; 6:12). He is the leader of a countless army of spirits (evil angels) who rebelled against the will of God (Rev 9:11; 12:3-4,7). These spirit beings, called demons, now seek to hinder the work of God (Gen 3:4-5; Matt 4:1-11; 2 Cor 11:13-15), but will face ultimate defeat and condemnation with Satan in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10).

12. The Second Coming

We believe in the literal return of Jesus Christ that will take place in two stages. The first stage is the Rapture, or His personal (1 Thess 4:16; 1 John 3:2), imminent (Rom 13:12; 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Thess 5:6), and pretribulation (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rev 3:10) coming for all saints of the church age (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:16-17). The second stage is the Revelation, or the Second Coming in Glory, which is His personal and public coming at the close of the Tribulation to establish the messianic, Millennial Kingdom on earth (Dan 7:9-14; Zech 14:1-4) when Israel will be restored to covenant favor with God (Jer 30:31-34; 31:28; Rom 11:25-27) and to her land in faith (Gen 13:14-17; 15:18; Deut 30:1-11; Zech 10:9-10) and the Church will reign with Christ for a thousand years (2 Tim

2:12; Rev 3:21; 20:1-6). After the Millennium there will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein God will dwell eternally with His people (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1-3).

13. The Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, though occurring at separate times (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:21-24). The souls of those who trust in Christ go immediately into His presence at death (Acts 7:59-60; 2 Cor 5:8) where they remain in conscious enjoyment of heaven until the resurrection of the just, at which time they will receive their glorified bodies (Rom 8:11,23; 1 Cor 15:22-24, 35-38; Phil 3:20-21) and will spend eternity in the presence of God worshipping and serving Him with joy that knows no sorrow (1 Cor 13:13; Rev 21:1-7; Ps 16:11). The souls of unbelievers go immediately at death to a place of conscious punishment and separation from God (Deut 32:22; Luke 16:23-25), where they will remain until the resurrection of the unjust, when they will be cast into the lake of fire as the eternal retribution for their sin (Matt 8:12; 18:8; Mark 9:43-48; Rev 20:14-15; 21:8). The resurrection of the just begins at the Rapture of the Church and is completed at the conclusion of the Tribulation (Dan 12:2; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 20:4-5). The resurrection of the unjust is after the Millennium (Rev 20:5,11-15).

14. Separation

We believe in both personal and ecclesiastical separation, both of which are grounded in the character of God. God's holiness makes Him separate from all that is unlike Him (Ps 99:1-3; Isa 57:15), and His demand that we be holy calls us to separate from anything which contradicts His holy will and character (Matt 5:48; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:15-16). We believe that personal separation is a Christian's determined effort to walk in the light as God is in the light (Rom 13:12-14; 1 John 1:5-7). God's people are not to participate in the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph 5:7-14), nor can they allow the world to become the object of their affection (1 John 2:15-17) or the mold for their thinking (Rom 12:1-2). The world is the transient system of evil which is in rebellion against God (Eph 2:1-3; Jas 4:4; 1 John 2:15) and is ruled by Satan (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; 2 John 5:19). The world lures believers to live according to the lusts of men rather than the will of God (Eph 4:17-19,22; 1 Pet 2:11; 4:2-4). We believe that holiness in the ecclesiastical realm is evidenced by separation from those who deny biblical truth (Matt 7:15; Gal 1:8-9; 1 John 4:1-6; 2 John 9-11) or walk in disobedience to it (2 Thess 3:6,14). Therefore, we believe that Bible-believing ministries, particularly local churches, should not collaborate with a church, ministry, or religious leader who does not hold to the fundamental doctrines of the Faith (i.e., liberalism). We further believe that God's Word further warns us not to associate with those who consistently fail to practice biblical separation (i.e., new evangelicalism).

***Note:** Westside Baptist Church may provide further definition and detail of these positions by adopting a more detailed Confession of Faith. Any such Confession must not conflict with these Articles, nor with Scriptural truth. Such Confession shall stand separate of these Articles, but must not contradict the Articles, or Scriptural truth. Its purpose will be to more fully define the Church's stands, so as to serve as a teaching tool for our members and their families.*

Additionally, from time to time, Westside may publish Resolutions which more clearly declare the Church's positions on relevant issues which have affected, are affecting, or could possibly affect the Body of Christ, and our own local church. Such Resolutions stand separate of these Articles, and any adopted Confession, but must not contradict the Articles, any Confession, or Scriptural truth.

XI. CHURCH COVENANT

The Westside Baptist Church Membership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, by repentance and faith through the sovereign grace of God, having been immersed upon profession of faith, in the name of the Almighty Father, His Blessed Son, and the Comforting Spirit, we solemnly and gladly covenant with one another, the Westside Baptist Church family. In doing so, through the empowerment and enablement of the Holy Spirit, and in our desire to proclaim Christ, to please Him, and to bring Him glory, we now commit ourselves to God and to each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We will allow God's Holy Spirit to work through us: to walk together in Christian love; to exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over one another and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require; to not forsake the assembly of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for others and ourselves. We will strive to think of each other's needs ahead of our own—using Christ as our example.

We will endeavor to bring up our children or those who come under our care, in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure example coupled with the Truth, in love, to seek the salvation of our friends and family.

We will rejoice in each other's happiness, and endeavor with tenderness, sympathy and God's Truth to bear each other's burdens. We will strive to comfort each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We will seek by Almighty God's strength, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have identified with Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and so voluntarily have been buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so we acknowledge there is a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We also bind ourselves together to strive for the advancement of this local Church in knowledge, holiness and spiritual comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully, generously, sacrificially and regularly to the support of the ministry, the sustaining of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Good News of Jesus Christ here, and throughout the world.

We, moreover agree together that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's holy, beautiful, inerrant Word.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.