

# Statement of Faith<sup>1</sup>

## **Section A - Doctrine of the Bible**

We believe in the Bible as the verbally (every word) and plenary (completely) inspired Word of God as contained in the original manuscripts; that all portions of Scripture are equally inspired and contain no contradiction; that the Scriptures are to be the only rule of faith and practice for the believer in Jesus Christ; and that the Canon, the sixty-six books of the Bible, is complete. Nothing shall be added to it nor taken from it.

The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastor. (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Revelation 22:18,19).

The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the church.

## **Section B - Doctrine 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. (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25, 27; Revelation 20:2-6).

## **Section C - Doctrine of God**

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience; each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:25; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1; 10, 26; John 14:10,16,17,26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Timothy 3:16).

## **Section D - Doctrine of Jesus Christ**

We believe in the essential Deity and Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ; that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, not having human father, and is true God and true man; that He is man's only hope of salvation from sin, being the only mediator between God and man; that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day for our sins according to the Scriptures; that His return for His Church, the Body of Christ, which He will take with Himself into Heaven is

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted in whole from Article III of the Constitution of Farmington Avenue Baptist Church of West Hartford, Connecticut.

imminent; and that He will come to this earth to set up His millennial reign (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-4; John 10:30; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6).

### **Section E - Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

We believe the Holy Spirit to be coequal with the Father and with the Son. He is a Person. He came to this earth as the fulfillment of Christ's promise. He convicts, regenerates, indwells, seals, infills, empowers, and guides the believer (John 16:7-13; John 3:35; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13,14; Ephesians 5:18).

We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-12).

We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that 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 (1 Corinthians 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22).

### **Section F - Doctrine of Man**

We believe that God created man in His own image and that man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is conscious and eternal separation from God. We believe that all men are born with a sinful nature, evidenced by sinful acts; that man is totally depraved; and that if he is not born again, he is eternally lost (Genesis 1:26,27; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Luke 16:23; Revelation 21:8; Romans 3:10-23; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22; Revelation 20:11-15).

### **Section G - Doctrine of Salvation**

We believe that a person is saved when he repents of his sin (Acts 20:21, Galatians 3:22, 2 Peter 3:9) and exercises faith by accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. The basis of our salvation is the precious blood of Christ according to 1 Peter 1:18-19, which states that we are redeemed *"...with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

We believe that the scope of salvation includes forgiveness of all our sins, past, present, and future; a perfect standing before God as in Jesus Christ; and the changing of our earthly body to be conformed like unto the body of our Lord at His return for His own.

We believe that the attitude either of reconciliation or enmity toward God is eternally fixed at death. We further believe that there is an appointed day for the judgement of the wicked when they will be cast into the Lake of Fire, there to remain in everlasting conscious punishment and torment (John 1:12; John 5:24; John 10:28,29; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8,9; 1

John 5:17; Romans 8:19-23; 1 John 3:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:12-15; Revelation 21:8).

### **Section H - Doctrine of Eternal Security**

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8, 1 Peter 1:4-5).

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

### **Section I - Doctrine of the Church**

The local church 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 Word, meeting together for fellowship, worship and Bible study, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by the Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. (Acts 2:37-47, 14:27; 16:14,15,30-34; 20:17, 28-32; Romans 6, Philippians 1:1.)

We believe that the Farmington Avenue Baptist Church is Baptist with the following Baptist distinctives that differentiate it from other denominations. These beliefs are the gauges by which our lives and our church are governed.

- B** Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- A** Autonomy of each local church.(Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- P** Priesthood of All Believers (1 Peter 2:9)
- T** Two Ordinances: Baptism by immersion (Acts 2:41) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-34)
- I** Individual Soul Liberty (Romans 10:13)
- S** Saved Church Membership (Acts 2:41,47)
- T** Two Offices: Pastors and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13)
- S** Separation of Church and State (Acts 5:29)

### **Section J - Doctrine of Satan and Fallen Angels**

We believe that Satan is a person. He is a created being who sinned and became the arch enemy of God and His creation. He is the chief adversary of God's children. He seeks to keep man from the Lord; and when he cannot succeed in this, he seeks to weaken the testimony of Christians. He has at his command a great host of fallen angels and demons to carry out his purposes. He is not omnipotent and can be overcome by the power of God. His doom is sealed in the Lake of Fire forever and ever (Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:10; Revelation 20:10).

**Section K - Doctrine of Last Things**

We believe there will be a resurrection of all, first the just at the coming of Jesus Christ, and finally the unjust after the millennium. The saints are raised to be forever with the Lord, and the unsaved will be confined for eternity in the Lake of Fire. We believe in the "Blessed Hope," which is the personal, bodily, pretribulational, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior for His Church (the rapture) and His later return to the earth (Revelation) in power and glory with His saints to set up His Kingdom (the millennium) (John 14:13; Acts 1:9; Acts 1:11; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-20; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1,2; Revelation 21:1-8).

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6).

We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15).

**Section L - Doctrine of Creation**

We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11).

**Section M - Doctrine of Separation**

We believe that God commands Christians to be a separated people according to 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 and 7:1: *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

The Farmington Avenue Baptist Church will be separated from all forms of apostasy and religious inclusivism. We reject the ecumenical movement joining all churches into one body regardless of doctrine or practice and the charismatic renewal movement with its unscriptural emphasis on tongues and healing. The church will enjoy fellowship with churches of like faith and order, but will have no part in any council of churches that is ecumenical in nature or thrust.

We believe Christians are to be personally separated from all worldly practices that hinder spiritual growth and stability. We believe that a Christian should live a holy life and maintain a testimony consistent with the Scriptures.

**Section N - Doctrine 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 (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 22:13-14).

### **Section O - Doctrine of Christian Education**

The Farmington Avenue Baptist Church believes that the children of our families need an education that trains children not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly (Psalm 1:1). The families need to obey Colossians 2:8 *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

Therefore, the Farmington Avenue Baptist Church believes that it must provide a Christian Academy to train the young people, and it must encourage all member families to enroll their children in a Christian education program. We believe that we must see that our children are protected according to Proverbs 19:17 *“Cease, my son to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”* (Deuteronomy 6:1-10; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 6:4; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:8).

### **Section P - Doctrine of Human Sexuality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should 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. (Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

### **Section Q - Doctrine of Family Relationships**

1. 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. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. 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. (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; I Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

**Section R - Doctrine of Divorce and Remarriage**

We believe that God hates 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 (Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

**Section S - Doctrine 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 mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

**Section T - Doctrine 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 of 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. (Exodus 20:13; 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28).

**Section U - Doctrine 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 and those who oppose us. 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. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18).

**Section V - Doctrine of Lawsuits Between Believers**

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. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

**Section W - Doctrine 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. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

### **Section X - Doctrine of Giving**

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. 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 the tithe or offering once the gift has been made (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17).