

# **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH SOUTHERN PINES**

## **CORE VALUES**

### **The Authority of Scripture**

We believe the Bible is the inspired written Word of God and is the normative guide for Christian faith and practice. The teachings of scripture as interpreted by the community of faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall guide the life, faith, and practice of the individual believer and the Church. The criterion by which scripture is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

### **The Lordship of Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We affirm both His humanity and His divinity. He is the one mediator between God and humankind, securing through His life and work our reconciliation with God. We believe, with Christians through the centuries, that Christ, through His death on the cross and His resurrection, has overcome the powers of darkness and death. We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and all those who by faith believe in Him shall be redeemed. As Lord, Christ is the head of the Church and the supreme authority for the Church and Christian life.

### **Priesthood of all Believers**

We affirm each individual believer has equal access to God and has the responsibility to minister in Christ's name. We adhere to the "soul competency of each believer" which affirms that every individual is competent under God to make moral, spiritual, and religious decisions. We, therefore, believe each person is free before God, having the privilege and responsibility to interpret the scriptures through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We affirm the individuality of our calling before God and affirm that men and women are equal and free before God to pursue their calling. Therefore, we ordain men and women as deacons and ministers.

### **Sanctity of the Family**

We affirm that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime as God intended. We praise God for His love, mercy, and forgiveness over our lives. We covenant to live as Christians in our homes, to engage in family and private devotions, to teach our children by instruction and example that Jesus is Savior and Lord.

### **The Autonomy of the Local Church**

We affirm the autonomy of the local church; therefore, we believe that the local community of faith is free to govern itself and is accountable to God alone. First Baptist

Church is free to determine its membership, leadership, worship order, and association with other Baptist institutions. We are a fellowship of people redeemed in Jesus Christ, who are called by God into a community of faith in which we voluntarily unite for worship, prayer, study, Christian service, and the propagation of the gospel of Christ. We believe that the church should carry out its work with love, support, and mutual respect.

## **The Separation of Church and State**

We affirm the separation of Church and state. We firmly believe that religion is best exercised when it is free, not coerced; therefore, the state should not prohibit the free exercise of faith. The Church, likewise, should not resort to civil power to carry out its work, but pursue spiritual means to accomplish its mission.

## **The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We affirm Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the two ordinances of First Baptist Church. We understand these ordinances symbolically as the redemption of Christ and His presence in worship. Baptism is to be administered by the Church under the authority of the triune God. The mode of baptism is immersion in water. Baptism is a public demonstration of the believer's receipt of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and willingness to die to sin and be raised with Christ in newness of life. The Lord's Supper, observed monthly, through the elements of the bread and the cup, is a sincere searching of one's heart, a thankful remembrance of Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross. The Lord's Supper is a blessed assurance of His return, and a joyous fellowship with the living Christ and His people.

## **Missions**

Missions are the extension of God's redemptive purpose through evangelism, education, and Christian service beyond the local church. As Baptists we seek to present the gospel of Christ in a way that is consistent with biblical faith, our Baptist heritage, and respects the person with whom we are sharing the message.

## **Cooperation**

Baptists are autonomous but cooperating people. We believe that cooperation is imperative for the mission and ministry of the church. The church is free to decide with whom it will associate or cooperate in the mutual ministry of the church. All such relationships are strictly voluntary, and no cooperating organizations have authority over the local church. First Baptist Church seeks to be ecumenical in its approach to mission and ministry. First Baptist Church, however, is free to enter or to sever any cooperative relationship when it is deemed necessary.

**April 3, 2024**