

WHY WE ARE BAPTISTS

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY- our one, sole authority for faith and practice

We believe the Bible is the inspired, authoritative word of God, which reveals His will and our duties, which is able and sufficient for us to know His will and do our duties, and which is the final source of appeal regarding faith and life among His people.

2 Timothy 3:15-17

AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH- directly answerable to Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that the local church is self-governing under the headship of Jesus Christ and the superintendence of the Holy Spirit. While fellowship with other Like-minded churches is encouraged, the local church is the final authority in such matters, surrendering nothing to any individual or organization's external control.

Revelation 2:1-3:22

PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER- able to go directly to God through Jesus

We believe every believer is a priest before God, having no mediator except the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer has equal, direct access to the throne of God.

1 Peter 2:5,9

TWO ORDINANCES- Baptism by Immersion and the Lord's Table

We believe Christ commanded the local church to observe two ordinances. The first ordinance is believer's baptism by immersion. In baptism a believer publicly confesses participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ by faith and is received into the church. The second ordinance is the Lord's Supper or Communion. The church regularly gathers together to call to remembrance the death of Christ as the basis for its union and communion with Christ and one another.

Matthew 28:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY- personal freedom and responsibility before God

We believe every believer has personal freedom and responsibility before God. The believer is free from any coercion others might place upon him, yet also responsible for his own actions before God and for treating others in love as he would be treated.

Romans 14:1-12

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE- mutually exclusive

We believe the Church and the State have been ordained of God, but that each has a mutually exclusive place and purpose. The State exists to provide general safety, order, and peace in society. The Church exists to proclaim the Gospel and to provide instruction in the word of God for itself and society. Though the well-being of society is commonly shared, neither must cross into the place or purpose of the other.

Matthew 22:21

TWO OFFICES- Pastor-Elder and Deacon

We believe Christ has ordained two offices for the local church. The **pastors-elders** provide spiritual leadership. They feed and care for the congregation, model experienced spiritual maturity for the congregation, and take oversight of the ministry of the church. The **deacons** provide service and physical assistance. They serve the needs of the congregation under the direction of the spiritual leadership, relieving them of duties of vital, yet secondary importance.

I Timothy 3:1-7, I Timothy 3:8-13

SAVED, REGENERATED MEMBERSHIP- regular assembly of believers in a church

We believe that the local church is to have a membership composed of those who have given a credible testimony and confession of faith by believer's baptism. The evidences of regeneration involve the fruits of faith, repentance, and holy living. The evidence of regeneration is manifest in a desire to identify with fellow believers in regular worship, fellowship, and service of a local church.

Acts 2:41-42, Acts 14:23-24, Hebrews 10:24-25