

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina

Proposed New Foundational Statements

The Nature of Our Fellowship

Our Purpose

Bringing Baptists of North Carolina together for Christ-centered ministry.

Our Declaration

We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

As a fellowship of churches walking together and drawn toward the center of our common life in Jesus Christ, we are led to ask: what is the nature of our fellowship with God and one another? The basis of our partnership in this journey rests on our fellowship with God whom we have come to know through Jesus Christ and our mutual call to be co-laborers in his mission. Within these relationships we freely offer our declaration on the nature of our fellowship.

Because we stand in the continuity of the historic church, we confess the biblical story we share with all other Christians—not as a matter of coercion or discipline, but as a simple acknowledgement of where we stand and what we believe.

1. We believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
3. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,¹ the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Because we are committed to historic Baptist principles and practices, we declare the convictions we share with our Baptist sisters and brothers throughout the world because God has granted us a distinctive journey as a people of faith.

1. We confess Jesus is Lord of all things and Head of the church.
2. We confess that God's truth found in Jesus Christ is revealed in the Old and New Testaments which are our authority for faith and living. As we study and practice the Scriptures communally and personally, the Holy Spirit transforms our lives, our congregations and our world.
3. We confess that the Christian faith is best understood and experienced within the community of God's people who are called to be priests to one another.
4. We confess that under the Lordship of Christ each congregation is free and responsible to discern the mind of Christ and to order its common life accordingly.
5. We confess that through the Holy Spirit we experience interdependence with other believers and congregations who follow Christ, and we seek the unity of the church for which he prayed.
6. We confess that the power and presence of God is manifest in the faithful observance of two ordinances: believers' baptism as a public declaration of discipleship for those who have repented of sin and come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Lord's Table where we gather often to be renewed in our faith commitments and to be reconciled to God and one another.

¹ The word "catholic" means the church that is extended throughout the world and through time.

7. We confess that God gives spiritual gifts to believers who are called to live a life of worship, service, and mission. These gifts are discerned and confirmed by the believing community together.
 8. We confess that the Holy Spirit calls men and women to be leaders in the church, including pastoral ministry, and that congregations call out the called.
 9. We confess that faith in Jesus Christ calls us to a passionate commitment to religious liberty, freedom, peace, justice, and reconciliation.
 10. We confess that every believer and every congregation, equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit, is called to demonstrate the good news of Christ, looking forward in hope to his return and God's New Heaven and a New Earth.
- Amen and Amen. Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus, come!

We offer our statement of faith in accord with the historic confessions of Baptists and other Christians, including the *Apostles' Creed*, (<http://www.creeds.net/ancient/apostles.htm>); the Baptist confession known as *The Orthodox Creed* (1679), (<http://www.baptisttheology.org/documents/OrthodoxCreed.pdf>); *The Baptist Faith and Message* (1963), (<http://www.nhlbc.org/nhlbc/docs/baptistfaithmsg.pdf>) and the Baptist World Alliance *Message from the Centenary Congress* (2005), (<http://www.bwanet.org/bwa.php?site=About+Us&id=24>); we thereby acknowledge that Christians throughout the history of the church have contributed valuable statements of faith which continue to give voice to how we profess our faith in Jesus Christ today. Our contemporary proclamation is in accord with the ancient Christian faith; therefore, we commend these statements to our fellowship for further study and reflection as together we seek to give an account for the hope that is among us.

Our Values

Our declaration of Christ-centered ministry leads us to embrace a shared set of values which include:

Community – We cherish the Christian community we share beyond our local congregations and come together frequently for worship, education, fellowship and service.

Missional Focus – We exist to participate in the mission of God in the world rather than to perpetuate organizational structures. We believe God has a call for each Christian, each congregation and each ministry agency. We help in the discerning, equipping and implementing of that call.

Collaborative Partnerships – We respect the calling and passions of other Christians (individuals, congregations, organizations and institutions) and commit to minister with them as mutual partners, actively working together to pursue a common mission.

Leadership – We enlist servant-leaders from local churches who guide us in understanding the needs of their congregations and communities. We seek leaders who reflect the multi-faced make-up of our fellowship.

Flexibility - We aim to be adaptable, responsive and relevant so that we may act quickly and effectively as new needs and ministry opportunities arise.

Spiritual Formation – We draw upon the breadth and depth of the whole Christian tradition to undergird our common life and ministry. Our life together is shaped through the practice of prayer and other spiritual disciplines.

Christian Education - We are committed to Christian higher education and lifelong learning to equip all baptized believers for mission and ministry. We also support equipping persons called by God to vocational ministry through quality theological education.

We share an affinity with the identity, mission, vision, and core values of the larger Cooperative Baptist Fellowship movement, including a commitment to Baptist principles, biblically based global missions, resourcing churches for mission, justice and reconciliation, lifelong learning and ministry, trustworthiness, and effectiveness, (<http://www.thefellowship.info/About-Us/Who-We-Are>).