

Great Swamp

*Baptist
Church*



**Membership
Handbook**

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Great Swamp Baptist Church

Members' Handbook

I. History

Great Swamp Baptist Church was organized on October 12, 1845 when seventeen members left the Sardis Baptist Church to form a ministry based on missions. Reverend John N. Youmans served as the first pastor.

The home of Sabert Woods served as the first meeting place until a small one-room sanctuary was built. A larger sanctuary was complete in 1909, and Sunday school rooms were added in 1925. Baptisms took place at "Old Dam" in the nearby stream until the 1950's. Great Swamp Baptist Church called its first full-time pastor in 1956. A Document of Incorporation was filed on March 17, 1958, with the state of South Carolina. The first constitution was written at this time.

II. Mission Statement

The mission of Great Swamp Baptist Church is to glorify God through all ministries of this body and to act in accordance with the covenant of our Church.

III. Vision Statement

We will witness to this community, the nation, and the world that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all who trust Him. We will disciple those who acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord and will create a local community of believers for worship, celebration, restoration, fellowship, education, and missions.

IV. Statement of Faith

We believe the Holy Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to be the infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. (II Timothy 3:15, I Peter 1:21)

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30)

We believe God the Father reigns over the universe, which He created, and all that is in it. He is all-powerful, all loving, and all knowing. (Genesis 1:1)

We believe in the following:

The deity of Jesus Christ, God the Son (John 10:33)

His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35)

His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26)

His miracles (John 2:11)

His baptism (Matthew 3:13, Luke 3:21, Mark 1:9)

His vicarious and atoning death (I Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9)

His resurrection (John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:4)

His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19)

His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11)

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling every Christian is enabled to live a godly life. (Romans 8:13, I Corinthians 3:16, I Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 5:18)

We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature; men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved. (John 3:16-19, John 5:24, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8-9, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5)

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29)

We believe in the spiritual unity of all born-again believers in the body of Christ. (Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-28)

V. Doctrinal Statement

This Church receives the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. The following Declarations of Faith herein contain the Church's understanding of Christian truth:

1. We believe the Bible is God's Word; it is written by men divinely inspired, and it is the supreme, infallible authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ.
3. We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, of Virgin Birth, sinless in life, making atonement for the sins of the world by His death. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension and visible return to the world, according to His promise.
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from God with righteousness and judgment to convict the world of sin and to regenerate, sanctify and comfort those who believe in Jesus Christ.

5. We believe that all men by nature and by choice are sinners, but ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.’ We believe, therefore, that those who accept Christ as Lord and Savior will rejoice forever in God’s presence, and those who refuse Christ as Lord and Savior will be forever separated from God.

6. We believe in the Church- a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head, and of which all regenerated people are members. We believe a local church is a company of believers in Jesus Christ, immersed on a credible confession of faith and associated for worship, work and fellowship.

7. We believe the local church is committed to the perpetual observances of the ordinances of baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the task of proclaiming to the lost world the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and the enthroning of Him as Lord and Master. We believe all human betterment and social improvements are the inevitable by-products of such a Gospel.

8. We believe every human being is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; each church is independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority. Therefore; church and state must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other.

VI. Covenant

The covenant that binds Great Swamp Baptist Church in fellowship shall be the covenant of guidance as set forth below:

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and his assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of the Church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk

circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger, to abstain from the sale of and the use of illegal drugs and intoxicating drinks as a beverage, to shun pornography, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of the Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer, to aid one another in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage 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 Word.

Adopted, June 7, 2006

