

ETHOS STATEMENT AGREED 28 JULY 2024

The vision of Rothwell Baptist Church is **to be a welcoming and caring all-age church, telling the good news about Jesus to our community and making disciples in our neighbourhood and beyond.**

This ethos statement describes what we believe and how these beliefs are integral to who we are and how we behave.

As Christians we believe that we have been reborn by our belief in Christ *(Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17))* and are enabled by the Holy Spirit to carry out God's work. We know that we are called to be Christlike in our behaviour, and this should permeate into every aspect of our lives.

Jesus said "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35). This command shapes our lives in the way we behave towards each other and those in the community with whom we interact.

We base our beliefs on the Holy Bible, and we uphold its truths. We don't have a detailed or prescriptive doctrine, but we do subscribe to the Baptist Union Declaration of Principle which is as follows:

1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried and rose again the third day'.

3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

This may well put us at odds with aspects of society that are regarded as normal by many but we steadfastly uphold the truth of the Bible as we understand it.

From time to time our members may differ in points of interpretation (outside the above 3 principles) and we will uphold and respect their rights to hold

different views. We will avoid entering into situations which may cause upset to members who hold views different to others in our fellowship (or even the majority).

We will have an Equal Opportunities Policy that protects our members and anyone else we interact with from discrimination and/or intimidation on the grounds of race, ethnic origin or disability, age, pregnancy, or maternity. Such discrimination is completely at odds with our beliefs and will not be tolerated. Some roles (volunteer and paid) in the Church will require the employee or volunteer to be a Christian and to behave in a manner that is in accordance with the principles of this ethos statement. -This will be made clear during the process of filling the role.

Our Charity Trustees will all be Deacons of the church (or a Minister) and as well as professing faith, we expect them to live by high standards of personal behaviour consistent with the ethos of the Church. Members are expected to hold them in esteem and respect.

Our Christian Beliefs

We recognise the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience for both churches and individuals to reach different interpretations of Scripture on some matters. We will not judge others on 'disputable matters' (*Rom 14:1*) and we are open to being persuaded regarding theological differences. Nevertheless, we have agreed on our position, in line with the ethos outlined above, on the following doctrines:

The role of women in leading and teaching.

RBC holds to the view that God created women and men equal in personhood and that He calls and equally affirms both men and women into a vast array of roles, including all forms of church leadership and teaching.

Sex, Gender and Marriage

We welcome and love all who come to us, whatever circumstances they face in their lives.

We hold to the traditional Biblical position that God made male and female (Gen 1:27) and gave marriage between a man and a woman as a gift to provide lifelong companionship, the joy of sexual intimacy, and the ideal setting into which children are born and nurtured. We believe that sexual intimacy is to be enjoyed within this marriage relationship only. God's ideal for marriage is for it to be lifelong, but the Bible allows for separation and divorce in certain

circumstances (Matt 5:32; 1 Cor 7:15). Those who are divorced (including those who have remarried) are therefore allowed full participation in the life of the church.

Use of the building

We offer our building for hire for a wide range of activities as a way of serving our community. But we are a Christian church, and we will not offer it to be used for meetings with a spiritual purpose other than Christian, or other uses that are contradictory to our ethos. This restriction applies to acts of worship, weddings, and funerals of other faiths and non-Christian worldviews, but would not preclude use of the building by people of other faiths and worldviews for other purposes.