

Partners in Hope

Statement of Faith and Christian Practices

1. **The Triune God:** There is one God, self-revealed as three persons, "of one substance, power and eternity," the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For the sake of the Gospel we decline proposals to modify or marginalize these names and we affirm their rightful place in prayer, liturgy, and hymnody. For the Gospel invites us through the Holy Spirit to share eternally in the divine fellowship, as adopted children of the God in whose family Jesus Christ is both our saviour and our brother. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21. Cf. Article I of the 39 Articles, Book of Common Prayer)

2. **Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier:** The almighty triune God created a universe that was in every way good until creaturely rebellion disrupted it. Sin having intruded, God in love purposed to restore cosmic order through the calling of the covenant people Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ to redeem, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to sanctify, the building up of the church for worship and witness, and the coming again of Christ in glory to make all things new. Works of miraculous power mark the unfolding of God's plan throughout history. (Genesis 1-3; Isaiah 40:28; 65:17; Matthew 6:10; John 17:6; Acts 17:24-26, 28; 1 Corinthians 15:28; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 21:5.)

3. **The Word made Flesh:** Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, sinless in life, raised bodily from the dead, and now reigning in glory though still present with his people through the Holy Spirit, is both the Jesus of history and the Christ of Scripture. He is God with us, the sole mediator between God and ourselves, the source of saving knowledge of the Godhead, and the giver of eternal life to the church. (Matthew 1:24-25; Mark 15:20-37; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 17:20-21; Acts 1:9-11; 4:12; Romans 5:17; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians. 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 1:2; 9:15.)

4. **The Only Saviour:** Human sin is prideful rebellion against God's authority, expressing itself in our refusing to love both the Creator and his creatures. Sin corrupts our nature and its fruit is injustice, oppression, personal and social disintegration, alienation, and guilt before God; it destroys hope and leads to a future devoid of any enjoyment of either God or good. From the guilt, shame, power, and path of sin, Jesus Christ is the only Saviour; penitent faith in him is the only way of salvation.

By his atoning sacrifice on the cross for our sins, Jesus overcame the powers of darkness and secured our redemption and justification. By his bodily rising he guaranteed the future resurrection and eternal inheritance of all believers. By his regenerating gift of the Spirit, he restores our fallen nature and renews us in his own image. Thus in every generation he is the way, the truth, and the life for sinful individuals, and the architect of restored human community. (John 14:6; Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-33; 4:12; Romans 3:22-25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-24; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 4:14; 5:11-12.)

5. **The Spirit of Life:** The Holy Spirit, "the Lord, the Giver of life," sent to the church at Pentecost by the Father and the Son, discloses the glory of Jesus Christ, convicts of sin, renews the

sinner's inner being, induces faith, equips for righteousness, creates communion, and empowers for service. Life in the Spirit is a supernaturalizing of our natural existence and a true foretaste of heaven. The loving unity of Spirit-filled Christians and churches is a powerful sign of the truth of Christianity. (Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:2-5; Psalm 51:11; John 3:5-6; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15; I Corinthians 2:4; 6:19; 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 4:4-6; 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:19; 2 Timothy 3:16.)

6. The Authority of the Bible: The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are "God's Word written," inspired and authoritative, true and trustworthy, coherent, sufficient for salvation, living and powerful as God's guidance for belief and behaviour. Christians may not judge the Scriptures, selecting and discarding from among their teachings, but Scripture under Christ judges us for our faithfulness to God's revealed truth. (Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 40:8; 55:11; Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35; 14:26; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21.)

7. The Church of God: The supernatural society called the church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is the community of believers, justified through faith in Christ, incorporated into the risen life of Christ, and set under the authority of Holy Scripture as the word of Christ. The church on earth is united through Christ to the church in heaven in the communion of the saints. Through the church's ministry of the word and sacraments of the Gospel, God ministers life in Christ to the faithful, thereby empowering them for worship, witness, and service. (Ephesians 3:10-21; 5:23, 27; I Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 3: 14-17.)

8. The New Life in Christ: God made human beings in the divine image so that they might glorify and enjoy their creator forever, but since the Fall, sin has alienated us all from God and disorders human motivation and action at every point. As atonement and justification restore us to fellowship with God by pardoning sin, so regeneration and sanctification renew us in the likeness of Christ by overcoming sin. The Holy Spirit, who helps us practice the disciplines of the Christian life, increasingly transforms us through them. Sinlessness, however, is not given in this world, and we who believe remain flawed "in thought, word and deed" until we are perfected in heaven. (Genesis 1:26-28; 3; John 3:5-6; 16:13.; Romans 3:23-24; 5:12; I Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 2:1-5; Philippians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:10-13.)

9. Ministry: The Holy Spirit bestows distinctive gifts upon all Christians for the purpose of glorifying God and building up his church in truth and love. All Christians are called in their baptism to be ministers, regardless of gender, race, age, or socioeconomic status. All God's people must seek to find and fulfill the particular form of service for which God has called and equipped them. (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:11; 12:4-7, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 4:11-13; I Timothy 3:1, 12-13; 5:17; Hebrews 2:11; I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10.)

10. The Priority of Evangelism: Evangelism means proclaiming Jesus Christ as divine Saviour, Lord, and Friend, in a way that invites people to come to God through him, to worship and serve him, and to seek the empowering of the Holy Spirit for their life of discipleship. All Christians are called to witness to Christ, as a sign of love both to him and to their neighbours. The task, which is thus a matter of priority, calls for personal training and a constant search for modes of persuasive outreach. We sow the seed, and look to God for the fruit. (Matthew 5:13-16; 28:19-

20; John 3:16-18; 20:21; Acts 2:37-39; 5:31-32; I Corinthians 1:23; 15:2-4; 2Corinthians 4:5; 5:20; I Peter 3:15.)

11. The Challenge of Social Action: The gospel constrains Christians to be "salt" and "light" in the world, working out the implications of biblical teaching for the right ordering of social, economic, and political life, and for humanity's stewardship of creation. Christians must exert themselves in the cause of justice and in acts of compassion. While no social system can be identified with the coming Kingdom of God, social action is an integral part of our obedience to the Gospel. (Genesis 1:26-28; Isaiah 30:18; 58:6-10; Amos 5:24; Matthew 5:13-16; 22:37-40; 25:31-46; Luke 4:17-21; John 20:21; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; James 2:14-26; I John 4:16; Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10.)

12. The Standards of Sexual Conduct: God designed human sexuality not only for procreation but also for the joyful expression of love, honour, and fidelity between wife and husband. These are the only sexual relations that biblical theology deems good and holy. Adultery, fornication, and homosexual unions are intimacies contrary to God's design. We must seek to minister healing and wholeness to those who are sexually scarred, or who struggle with ongoing sexual temptations, as most people do. Homophobia and all forms of sexual hypocrisy and abuse are evils against which Christians must ever be on their guard. We may not lower God's standards of sexual morality for anyone, but must honour God by upholding these standards tenaciously in face of society's departures from them. Christians must seek to meet the particular needs for friendship and community that single persons have. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-24; Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-12; Luke 7:36-50; John 8:1-11; Romans 1:21-28; 3:22-24; I Corinthians 6:9-11, 13-16; 7:7; Ephesians 5:3; I Timothy 1:8-11; 3:2-4, 12.)

13. The Family and the Call to Singleness: The family is a divinely ordained focus of love, intimacy, personal growth and stability for women, men and children. Divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, rape, pornography, parental absenteeism, sexist domination, abortion, common-law relationships, and homosexual partnerships, all reflect weakening of the family ideal. Christians must strengthen family life through teaching, training, and active support, and work for socio-political conditions that support the family. Singleness also is a gift from God and a holy vocation. While single, Christians are called to celibacy and God will give them grace to live in chastity. (Psalm 119:9-11; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:6-9; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21; I John 3:14-15.)

I have read this statement of faith. I am in agreement with these statements without reservation. I am willing to uphold these statements with my life and teaching and understand that my missionary/co-ordinator, Board of Director service with Partners in Hope Recovery Society continues only as long as I remain in agreement with these statements in life and teaching.

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