

## **Statement of Faith of Hillcrest Community Church, Inc.**

This Statement of Faith is intended as an expression of the core beliefs of the Church, but it does not set forth every detail of our faith. The Statement of Faith is intended to establish core beliefs for the guidance of future directors, council members, pastors, officers, and employees of the Church when acting to develop and implement teaching/preaching, mission efforts, guidelines for use of Church property, and employment. No one should be installed or retained as a director, council member, pastor, officer, employee, or other representative of the Church unless that individual commits to upholding this Statement of Faith in all aspects of the conduct of such position.

This fellowship of the Body of Christ believes that:

- A. We believe that God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is both holy and loving.
- B. We believe that Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God. He lived a sinless human life and died on the cross to atone for our sins. He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and will return again to Earth.
- C. We believe that the Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. When we receive Jesus as the leader of our lives and the forgiver of our sins, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He provides us with power for living, enables us to understand spiritual truth and guides us in doing what pleases God. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.
- D. We believe that the Bible is God's Word written by human authors under the inspiration and supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the final authority for determining our Christian beliefs and how we are to live. We consider the Holy Scriptures to include the 39 traditional books of the Old Testament and the 27 traditional books of the New Testament.
- E. We believe that the following documents are guides to our fuller understanding of the Bible and are secondary expressions of our faith:
  - 1. The Apostle's Creed
  - 2. The Nicene Creed
  - 3. The sermons of John Wesley and early statements of Wesleyan Methodism, specifically including:
    - a) John Wesley's 44 sermons published in 1748; and
    - b) John Wesley's 9 sermons published in 1771; and
    - c) John Wesley's explanatory notes on the New Testament; and
    - d) John Wesley's General Rules as adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785 which present a summary expression of the original precepts of Methodism as to how Christians should live in the world; so as to do no harm, to do good to all, and to stay connected to the sacramental and devotional life of the church.

- F. We believe that all people are made in the spiritual image of God — we are rational and moral beings. Because we are God's creation made in God's image, each person possesses great self-worth. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of self-centeredness which the Bible calls "sin." This attitude and its resultant actions separate us from God, others and ourselves.
- G. We believe that becoming right with God and having our relationship with God restored is what the Bible calls salvation. Salvation is God's free gift to us. We can never earn it or achieve it by self-improvement or good works. We accept God's gift of a new life when we turn from our self-ruled life and accept Jesus as our Savior. The new life that God gives us is an abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come.
- H. We believe that "Good works" are not optional for the Christian life. When we give our lives to Christ, it is expected that we will grow toward loving God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves. Though we are not made right with God by our own goodness, saving grace should bear fruits of good works in those who are saved.
- I. We believe that the term "marriage" is a union sanctioned by God between one man and one woman. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility or space owned, leased, or rented by this Church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined by anatomy at birth.
- J. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- K. We believe that all people, regardless of race, nationality, sexual orientation, or any other distinction or label, are created by God and bear his image. All people are welcome in our Church. This welcome includes not only attendance at worship but includes full engagement in the fellowship, missions and ministries of the Church.
- L. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal graciously, humbly, gently, and patiently with those who oppose us. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such actions.

We believe that this Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible, and therefore, all teaching and activities of the Church ought to conform to this Statement of Faith. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the Church shall be in agreement with this Statement of Faith. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by the Church, or engaged in by the Church staff or leadership (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this Church shall be in conformance with the Statement of Faith. The Pastor and Church Council shall have the final authority to interpret, apply, and enforce faithfulness to the Statement of Faith.

This Statement of Faith was adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of both the Board of Directors and the Church Council in accordance with the Bylaws of the Church.

May 8, 2023  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Secretary