



## STATEMENT OF FAITH & BELIEFS

We believe the Bible, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, made up of 66 books, to be the inspired, the only infallible, inerrant, sufficient, and authoritative Word of God. We believe that the Bible, in its original transcripts and writings, being the revelation of God through God's divine inspiration, is fully trustworthy and is the definitive source of truth and therefore the supreme authority and practical instruction in all matters of faith and conduct. We believe that the Holy Scripture contains in it the will and reflection of God.

Based on our belief that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God in Scripture, we profess with the Christian Church throughout time and around the world the faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I 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 into hell.  
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 to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.*

In addition to the Apostles' Creed, HCRC affirms the specific statements of belief, creeds and confessions that stand as faithful witnesses to the Word of God, held in the following documents:

- The Nicene Creed
- The Athanasian Creed
- The Heidelberg Catechism
- The Belgic Confession
- The Canons of Dort
- The Belhar Confession

**The Great Lakes Catechism on Human Sexuality**

Contained within these documents is the vast majority of Christian belief statements, faithful and historical witnesses, and guides to interpretation of the teaching of Scripture, that HCRC affirms.

HCRC also affirms the following statements regarding subjects of contemporary cultural significance as they relate to the Biblical **teaching** and Christian faith and life. The purpose of these statements is one of loving convictions to the teachings of Scripture, the Holy Bible. They are in no way meant as hateful or exclusive speech, for that would be in contrast to the teachings of Scripture and of Jesus who commanded His followers to love as He has loved us (John 13:34, 15:17). Instead, we make these statements in love and for the life of the world that God has reconciled through Jesus Christ, that through the teachings of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit, we may be Sanctified, putting off our old selves and shedding our lives of sin, following God obediently as disciples of Jesus Christ and ambassadors of the Gospel through our lives in

### **Sanctity of Human Life:**

We believe Scripture teaches that God created human life unique from all other life on this earth (Gen.1:26). Whereas Genesis 1:24 records God sharing the creative work of producing animals, Genesis 1:27 clearly reveals God's exclusive work in the creation of human beings, both male and female. Humans are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and bear that image throughout their lives as His representatives, responsible agents in the world, both morally and physically (Genesis 1:28-29; 2:16-17).

Having been created in and thus bearing the image of God, human beings share many characteristics of God including, but not limited to intellectual ability, morality, love (Deut. 6:4-9; Lev. 19:19), spiritual nature (John 4:23-24), creativity (Genesis 1:28; Exodus 35:31-35; Romans 12:6), and the ability to choose (Gen. 2:16-17; Deut. 30:19-20; Rev. 3:20). The Bible teaches that each individual is known by God from before the foundation of the world (Jer. 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16) and that, even in death, God is still concerned with His people (Psalm 116:16; Romans 8:38-39; Eph 1:14). We, therefore, hold all human life to be sacred, bearing the image of God, reflecting His glory, and thus inherently deserving of dignity from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.

We, furthermore, commit ourselves to the Biblical definition of justice in the world. The Bible's references to the word "justice" mean "to make right." Justice, we believe, is, first and foremost, a relational term that refers to people living in right relationship with God, one another, and the natural creation. The Bible provides ample support for the various ways in which this should be seen in the lives of believers (Exodus 23:6; Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 25:31-40; James 1:27). The Biblical worldview of justice means loving our neighbor as we love ourselves and is rooted in the character and nature of God. Scripture reveals God as perfectly just and loving (Psalm 33:5; Isaiah 61:8), so we are called to do and uphold justice and live in love (Deuteronomy 16:20; Psalm 106:3; Micah 6:8). All of this is a lived expression of faith and following Jesus Christ and we, therefore, view all forms of injustice as a violation of human rights as well as the sanctity of the lives of all humans who are made in the image of God.

We, therefore, reject any action, philosophy, law, or ideology that would violate the sanctity of human life including, but not limited to abortion, except in extreme cases where it is determined that both the lives of mother and baby cannot be saved (including contraception intended to prevent implantation after conception, abortifacients, etc.), murder, suicide, euthanasia, torture, abuse, unjust and/or unethical imprisonment, eugenics, genetic engineering or physical modification of humans for purposes other than medical treatment, human cloning, unethical/immoral treatment of immigrants both legal and illegal, slavery, human sex trafficking, pornography, and any form discrimination, oppression, and/or systemic injustice based on race, gender, ability, disability, religion, political views, etc. We also reject responses to such things that come through violence, criminal activity, the slander or purposeful disobedience of governing authorities (insofar as those authorities are seeking the wellbeing of the people they are governing and laws are both just and equitable), and/or the willful harming of persons or property (Ephesians 4:26-31; Romans 12:19; Matthew 5:43-47). We believe that the Bible speaks against such things, whether directly or indirectly, as being contrary to the will of God in and for the lives of believers.

### **Christian Stewardship:**

We believe in one eternal, everlasting, preeminent God who is the Creator of all things (Rev. 22:13, Psalm 90:2, John 1:1-2, Gen. 1, Col. 1:16, Eph. 1:4, Jude 1:25). As the sole Creator, all things in our universe belong to Him and are ruled and sustained by Him (Psalm 24:1, Deut. 10:14; Job 38-41, Col 1:16-17, Psalm 55:22; 73:26). God, in creating humanity, blessed them and commanded them to subdue and rule over the

earth (Gen. 1:28), placing them in the Garden of Eden with the task of cultivating and keeping it (Gen. 2:15). Scripture also commands us to honor God in all things (Colossians 3:17), doing everything as if it were to the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:31). Thus we seek, by both personally and corporately, to be good stewards of all that God has blessed us with, honoring Him in how we manage these things (James 1:22).

Scripture encourages God's people to be caretakers of God's creation, stewarding well all of the resources that God has provided including, but not limited to creation, the environment, plants, animals, all living things, wealth, material possessions, employment, gifts, time, and talents (Lev. 25:1-5, 1 Chronicles 29:10-14, Psalm 24:1). God has graciously entrusted us with the care, management, development, and enjoyment of everything He owns as his stewards. We are, therefore, responsible to manage His holdings well and according to his desires and purposes. Humans are all stewards of the resources, abilities, and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us (Matt. 25:14-30).

We, therefore, encourage all people to treat the earth, all of its life and resources, with the utmost respect and care. We further commit to and encourage all people to work toward the conservation of resources and the limiting of those things which pollute or otherwise cause harm to the environment. We also commit to an attitude of thankfulness, cherishing all of the blessings that God has given to us and desiring to see them used, and reused if possible, for the fullness of His glory.

Additionally, we believe that Scripture teaches, in the same light, that the resources of money, time, and work are included in the Biblical teachings of God-honoring, personal stewardship. We, therefore, commit to Biblical models of financial stewardship including, but not limited to the Biblical model of tithing (Gen 14:20b, Lev. 27:30-32, Deut. 14:22-26, Prov. 3:9, Mal 3:10, 2 Cor 9:7), the avoidance of debt where possible (Proverbs 22:7, Rom. 13:8), responsible budgeting (Luke 14:28, living within our means (Prov. 13:11, Matt. 6:19-21), and responsible investing (Prov. 13:22; 16:8). We also seek to cultivate a spirit of joyful generosity toward others (Prov. 11:24; 2 Cor. 9:6-7). All this we do to honor God for the great gifts, abundant blessings, and continual provision He has given to us (Matt. 6:21, 33, John 3:27, Col. 3:23, James 1:17).

### **Human Sexuality, Gender, and Marriage:**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders, **created by God and defined genetically at birth**, together reflect the image and nature of God which are ordained by Him and are part of the created order. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18, 21-24; Eph. 5:22-33.) We, therefore, believe that the rejection of one's biological sex, as defined genetically and determined at birth, is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "Christian marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10) **We also believe that all forms of heterosexual conduct outside of a monogamous marriage relationship between one man and one woman (including polyamory, polygomy, open relationships, swinging, and the like) is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 1:22-23; Matthew 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 17:17; 1 Corinthians 7:2; 1 Timothy 3:2)**

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of HCRC as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the HCRC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by HCRC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Human Sexuality, Gender, and Marriage. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) Though we grieve the sin that is present in our lives and in the world, we believe that God has called all Christians to a loving ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:11-21) and, therefore, join

Him in proclaiming the loving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, encouraging the repentance of all sin, and the acceptance of God's gracious gift of forgiveness through His Son (John 3:16; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:9-12). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual, for any reason, are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines, beliefs, or values of HCRC.

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and Infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of HCRC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Consistory, as defined in Article IV of the HCRC Bylaws, is HCRC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.