

**The Community of Hope Statement of Faith**  
*(What we believe)*

John Wesley, the founder of a renewal movement within the Church of England, which later became the Methodist church had this to say about Christian belief when he quoted Augustine:

*"In essentials, let us have unity, in non-essentials, let us have liberty, and in all things, let us show charity (love).*

In applying Wesley's "rule" of belief, Community of Hope strives toward:

I. Unity in Essentials:

*Ephesians 4:1-6 (NIV)*

*<sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Throughout history, the church has organized its understanding of essential Christian belief around the Apostles' Creed, which states:

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker*

*of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:*

*Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,*

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.*

*The third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven,*

*and sits at the right hand of God the father, Almighty. From thence*

*He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The Holy Catholic Church (Church Universal),  
The communion of Saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the Body,  
And the life everlasting, Amen.*

## 1. Trinity:

### A. God:

God the Father is Creator and Ruler of the universe. He eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal, each possessing the attributes of deity.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:1; 1:26-27; 3:3. Matthew 28:19, I Peter 1:2; and II Corinthians 13:14.

### B. Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life on earth and voluntarily paid for our sin by dying on the cross in our place. He rose physically from the dead, thereby demonstrating his power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven and will return to earth as judge of the living and the dead.

Scriptural references: Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14; John 1:10-30; Hebrews 4:15; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13.

### C. The Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is present in the world to guide us into truth and make us aware of our need for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit draws us toward Jesus Christ for salvation. The Holy Spirit lives in every Christian, equips every Christian for

living the Christian life, and makes them useful in service to Christ and His church.

Scriptural References: John 14:15-17; John 14:26-27; I Corinthians 12:1-12; II Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-16; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18.

## 2. Salvation by Grace:

Salvation is a gift from God which must be accepted individually by repentance and faith. This must take place on this side of eternity. Salvation happens when a transfer takes place from trusting in our own human effort and/or knowledge to trusting solely upon what Jesus Christ has done.

Scriptural References: Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; John 10:10.

## 3. Authority of the Bible:

The Bible is God's word to us. Human authors, under the inspirational guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Bible. It is the source of truth for Christian belief and practice, and is the final authority, without error, in all matters on which it bears.

Scriptural References: Psalm 119:105; Psalm 119:160; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 1:13.

## 4. Personal God:

God is personal and is involved in and cares about our daily life. He has a purpose for our lives. His power can enable us to do things we could not or would not do otherwise.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 121

## 5. Identity in Christ:

Our significance comes from being a child of God. God loves us, and therefore each human life has value.

Scripture Reference: John 1:12-13

## 6. Church:

The community of all true believers is Christ's body on earth—the Church. Christ wants each believer to be connected with a local church, because the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today. The purpose of the church is to share the gospel and nurture Christians to maturity in Christ.

Scripture References: Ephesians 4:15-16; Hebrews 10:23-25

## 7. Humanity:

Humanity has been created by God and bears the image of God, though we were formed out of dust. We have been created to enjoy fellowship with God the Father, through Jesus Christ. Having defied God by choosing to go our own way, our sinful disobedience has separated us as unholy people from a Holy and perfect God. This situation is only remedied through personal acceptance of what Christ has done for humanity through His shed blood on a Roman cross. There is no amount of human effort that can remedy this hopeless situation and make it possible to attain salvation.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6  
Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; I Timothy 2:5-6.

## 8. Compassion:

God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need and to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 82:3-4

## 9. Eternity:

Each human being has a soul that was created to live forever. We will either live in union with God in heaven or be separated from God in hell. Eternal life with God begins the moment we receive Christ into our lives by faith.

Scripture References: John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; I Corinthians 2:7-9.

## 10. Stewardship:

Everything we are is because of God, and everything we own belongs to God. Temporary, material things are not worth living for. Our life, talents, time, and resources are meant to be invested in things of eternal value.

Scripture Reference: I Timothy 6:17-19

## II. Liberty in Non-Essentials:

*Romans 14:1-4 (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup> *Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.* <sup>2</sup> *One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.* <sup>3</sup> *The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.* <sup>4</sup> *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

## III. Charity (Love) in All Things:

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup> *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.* <sup>2</sup> *If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

<sup>3</sup> *If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

*1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)*

<sup>13</sup> *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*