

Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting

Statement of Faith

- 1. God as Creator:** We believe God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, whose creative work provides the basis for order, beauty, purpose, and rationality. God is holy and eternal; He is loving, almighty, and all-wise. He reveals Himself and His will to His creation. He illuminates humankind through rational understanding, experience, and direct revelation. He speaks through the sacred and inspired writings of the Bible (the Scriptures). We believe that by freeing us from sin (redemption), God is bringing the universe into a magnificent and beautiful (glorious) expression of His purpose. In joy of this truth we offer Him honor and praise.
- 2. God's Revelation in Christ:** We believe that the word of God spoken into every heart was supremely manifest in Jesus Christ, who in His virgin birth and sinless life was true God and perfect man. Christ is the Word. He is the Light that exposes our sin and brings us into the rightness and goodness (righteousness) of God. He is the Savior who died in our place because of our sin (atonement). Through His atonement and resurrection we receive the forgiveness of God. He is Lord and to Him we give our obedience. Christ is the first and last word of divine wisdom by which God is drawing His creation into a fresh, binding promise of peace (new covenant).
- 3. God's Revelation by the Spirit:** We believe God is the source of truth, that there are no spiritual insights or principles independent of His revelation. God's Spirit teaches us through the Scriptures and through the creation. He makes our hearts sorry for our sin (conviction), instructs our conscience, testifies to the offer of forgiveness and a right relationship with God (salvation) through Christ, and gives wisdom and power for holy living. The Holy Spirit gives deep understanding (discernment) concerning the purposes of God through natural and social history. The Holy Spirit enlightens reason and quickens human creativity that we might share in the work of the Creator.
- 4. God's Revelation in the Scriptures:** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. They are the divinely

authorized record of the teachings (doctrines) that we as Christians are bound to accept, and of the moral principles that are to regulate our lives and actions. By their own declaration, the Scriptures are able to make us *“wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15 NIV). Interpreted by the Spirit of Jesus Christ (the Holy Spirit), they are an unfailing source of truth. We believe the Holy Spirit will not lead persons or groups contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures.

5. **Human Redemption:** We believe that God created the human being, male and female, in His own image; but that when Adam and Eve fell from a state of holy obedience, the human race lost a perfect relationship to God. Self instead of the Creator became the center of life. Through the blood of Christ our Savior we may be recovered from the fall and made right (justified) before God. To those who put their faith in Christ, God offers forgiveness of sins, transformation (regeneration) of affections and actions in this present life, and final transformation with a heavenly body in the life to come (resurrected body).
6. **The Baptism with the Holy Spirit:** We believe Christ’s baptism to be the inward receiving of the promised Holy Spirit, whereby the believer is immersed in Jesus’ power, purity, and wisdom. This baptism is the essential Christian baptism: an experience of cleansing from sin that supplants old covenant rituals. The making of pure and holy people (sanctification) that is initiated with this experience is a continuing work of the Holy Spirit in which we are instructed into righteous living and perfected in love. Thus sanctification is the work of God’s unmerited favor and unconditional love (grace) by which our affections are purified and exalted to a supreme love of God.
7. **The Church:** We believe the Church is composed of persons who, through turning from sin (repentance) and faith in Jesus Christ, have been born into Christ’s spiritual reign (the Kingdom) and baptized with the Holy Spirit into the spiritual Body of Christ on earth, which is the church. These persons agree together to follow Jesus as Lord. This Church is spiritual in nature, universal in scope, holy in character, and redemptive in purpose. Its head is Jesus Christ, who serves immediately as priest and ministers directly as teacher and prophet. The Church exists visibly in local meetings for worship and in groupings of these churches as they are united in common expressions of faith and action.

8. **God's Kingdom:** We believe the Church is called to demonstrate in this life the righteous character of Christ's present and coming Kingdom. The Kingdom is present now to the extent that the people of God hear His voice and obey it. The coming Kingdom will be initiated by the second appearing of Jesus Christ (as foretold by the prophets) and by the resurrection of the dead. The world will then be judged righteously by Jesus Christ and there will come everlasting punishment for the finally unrepentant wicked and everlasting blessedness for the righteous. At that time the world will be freed from the grip of evil and satanic power, and Christ will reign over a restored universe.
9. **The Spiritual Experience:** We believe that we may experience Christ directly and immediately without the necessity of priestly or ceremonial intervention and that this experience is available to every person. The spiritual life is nourished by the Holy Spirit, who teaches and guides us both individually and corporately according to His commandments. For Friends the supper of the Lord is an inward feeding on Christ by faith in response to His broken body and shed blood and is not limited to a single ritual of the church. A sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible divine grace from God. Friends believe that a sacramental life is not limited to a couple of historic rituals, but that the grace and presence of God can be experienced in a multitude of ways for those who are receptive to the Holy Spirit.
10. **Worship:** Worship is the adoring response of heart and mind to the Spirit of God. The meeting for worship brings a personal and corporate renewal, a spiritual encouragement (edification), a deep fellowship shared in Christ (communion of believers), and a witness of the Good News of Jesus Christ (the Gospel) to those unconverted. We recognize the value of silence to center our thoughts upon God. We believe the Spirit speaks to those who worship through persons He has prepared and selected, whose message may be given in various modes by men or women, children or adults. We believe God calls some persons to a special preaching ministry, which the church should respectfully receive. Friends observe the first day of the week for corporate worship and for rest.

This Statement of Faith has been adapted from the Doctrinal Statement of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Approved at Poplar Ridge Friends Monthly Meeting – January 10, 2012.