

# **LIVING HOPE CHURCH EXPANDED DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

*The following statements represent a synopsis of Christian belief. Living Hope Church uses a “two-tiered” approach to doctrine. The summary headings in bold constitute the Belief Statement to which all Committed Participants and Active Participants who teach in the church pledge their assent. The explanations which follow constitute the Expanded Doctrinal Statement to which all Elders pledge their assent. Concerning the summary headings, the church community will stand together in unity and conviction. Concerning the expanded explanations, the church community will stand together – even when personal convictions differ – in love and respect.*

## **1- God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – created all things for his glory and humanity for relationship with him.**

God – the tri-unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – created and sustains the world and all that exists, out of nothing, by the power of His Word, for his own glory.<sup>1</sup> God formed humanity, male and female, in his image and likeness, distinct from the rest of creation, to reflect his glory, represent Him on earth, care for his world, and live in loving relationship with him.<sup>2</sup> Knowing this relationship would be broken by human rebellion, God planned, before the foundation of the world, to send a Savior to restore this relationship through his death and resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

## **2- God’s Word, the Bible, guides people to himself and is the final standard of Truth.**

God has revealed himself through all that he created and through divinely inspiring the authors of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> These Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, as God has preserved in reliable manuscripts, are the only true, complete, reliable, trustworthy, inspired, authoritative Words of God and should be translated into languages common to all people.<sup>5</sup>

## **3- God has a good and sovereign plan encompassing all events, people, and spiritual beings.**

God – who is fully loving, personal, righteous, just, and powerful – is sovereign over all things, events, people, and angelic beings, both good and evil, orchestrating them according to his plan, for his glory and ultimate good.<sup>6</sup> God has given man a true and voluntary will, yet it is subject to His ultimate governance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1-2, Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6-9; Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 10:10-12; John 1:3; Acts 17:24-25; Romans 4:17; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:26-28, 2:5-25, 5:1, 9:6; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9.

<sup>3</sup> John 3:16; Ephesians 1:3-12; 3:11-12; Colossians 2:12-14; II Timothy 1:9-10; I Peter 1:17-21.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 19:1-2; Romans 1:20.

<sup>5</sup> Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8, Isa 40:8; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 11:12; II Peter 1:20-21.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 50:20; I Samuel 2:6; Job 42:11; Proverbs 16:4, 33; 20:24; Isaiah 45:6-7; Lamentations 3:37-38; Amos 3:6; Acts 2:23; 17:26; Romans 8:28; 13:1; II Corinthians 2:6-7; 4:19; Ephesians 1:11-12.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 7:3; 8:15; 35:29; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 37:23; 139:1-4, 13-16; Proverbs 16:9; 21:1; Daniel 4:35; Acts 4:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:23; 2:12-13.

#### **4- God regards all people as disobedient, rebellious, separated from him, and needing his forgiveness.**

God appointed the first man, Adam, to represent humanity, and so the state of sin into which he walked has been attributed to all of mankind.<sup>8</sup> Correspondingly, each person willingly chooses to turn from God and live in disobedience and rebellion from him.<sup>9</sup> In his unregenerate state, man is spiritually dead, enslaved to his sin, and incapable of pleasing God or repairing the relationship in his own strength.<sup>10</sup>

#### **5- God's Son, Jesus, came to earth, was fully God and fully Man, lived perfectly, died on a cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven.**

God the Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to fulfill the covenant with Israel by establishing a new covenant in his blood and thereby reconciling one unified people to God.<sup>11</sup> This Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, was both fully God and fully man and lived a life without sin as humanity's second representative to accomplish God's eternal purpose for redemption.<sup>12</sup> After a ministry of teaching, healing, and miracles, Jesus was crucified and buried.<sup>13</sup> After a period of three days, God raised Jesus from the dead in bodily form, and he remained on earth for 40 days before ascending to heaven.<sup>14</sup>

#### **6- God the Son will come again to bring the end of this world and eternal judgment.**

God the Son, Jesus Christ, will come again to the earth in bodily form, at an unknown time, bringing to completion God's plan of redemption secured at his first coming.<sup>15</sup> At the second coming, he will bring final judgment on all people, living and dead, and angelic beings, and transform all things into a new heaven and a new earth.<sup>16</sup> The unrepentant will face eternal punishment, and the regenerate will be raised to eternal life with a glorified body.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 3:6; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-15; II Corinthians 15:21-22.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 29:13; Romans 3:9-23.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Isaiah 59:1-2; 64:5-6; John 3:19-20; 8:43-44; Romans 6:16; 7:18; 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 1:15-16.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 18:31-33; 22:20, 24:25-27, 44-48; Acts 26:22-23; Romans 2:28-29, 4:11-12, 11:11-24; III Corinthians 1:20; Galatians 3:16, 27-29; Ephesians 2:11-19, 3:6; Hebrews 8:6-13, 11:13-16, 39-40, 12:24; I Peter 1:10-12.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 2:6-7, 39-40, 3:23-38; John 1:1, 10:30; Romans 3:24-26, 5:15-17; II Corinthians 15:21-22; III Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:10-12; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 1:18-20; I John 4:2-3.

<sup>13</sup> Mark 1:1:21-22, 32-34, 4:37-41, 15:22-47; II Corinthians 15:1-4.

<sup>14</sup> Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:36-43; Acts 1:1-3, 4:10; Romans 8:11; II Corinthians 15:4-8.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 24:42-44, 25:13; Mark 13:31-33; Luke 12:40; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 5:1-3; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28, 10:12-14; James 5:7-9; Revelation 1:7.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 65:17, 66:22; Matthew 12:36-37, 25:31-33; John 5:26-27; Acts 10:42, 17:31; Romans 8:21; III Corinthians 5:10; II Timothy 4:1; II Peter 2:4, 3:10; Jude 1:6; Revelation 20:11-12, 21:1-4, 22:12.

<sup>17</sup> Job 19:25-26; Isaiah 26:19; Matthew 23:33, 25:34-46; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 12:5, 16:19-31; John 5:28-29, 6:39-40, 11:23-25; 14:3; Acts 24:15; Romans 2:5-7, 6:22-23, 8:23; II Corinthians 15:12-24, 35-57; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:16-18; I John 2:25; Revelation 20:13-15.

## **7- God's Son died to accomplish the forgiveness of sin and rose from the dead to accomplish the infilling of new life, applied by faith.**

God, motivated by love and justice, transferred human sin onto Jesus at his death, poured out his just punishment, and accomplished the forgiveness of sins.<sup>18</sup> And, through the resurrection of Jesus, those who were spiritually dead are born again into a victorious new life, which is eternal.<sup>19</sup> Through faith in this Gospel, believers are united with Christ in his death and resurrection and, as their substitute, his redemptive work is counted as their own.<sup>20</sup>

## **8- God rescues people from death into life based on his initiative and grace.**

God distributes forgiveness and new life solely based on his own grace and not any merit or inclination of man.<sup>21</sup> Desiring to glorify Himself through His mercy and love, God chose some to have the blindness of sin removed, receive the gift of faith, and voluntarily accept the offer of salvation made to all people.<sup>22</sup> Seeing fit to glorify himself through His justice and judgment, God leaves others in their natural state of sin resulting in eternal death.<sup>23</sup>

## **9- God's Spirit fills all who believe with daily strength, spiritual gifts, and enduring faith.**

God the Holy Spirit fully immerses every believer at the moment of regeneration, and yet the believer should continually seek to be filled by the Spirit.<sup>24</sup> The indwelling of the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to commune with God in prayer, walk in purity, and be a witness for Christ.<sup>25</sup> He distributes gifts – including service gifts, proclamation gifts, leadership gifts, prophetic gifts, and sign gifts – to every believer for the edification of the Church and furthering of the Kingdom.<sup>26</sup> Those who are true believers in the Gospel, receiving faith and being truly regenerated, will be upheld by God's Spirit until the end.<sup>27</sup>

## **10- God intends for his Church to gather for worship, maintain purity, and spread the Gospel.**

God expects His people, the Church, to gather regularly for worship, study and teach the Word of God, receive financial offerings, and encourage individuals in times of adversity.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew 26:26-28; Romans 5:8-10; I Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:26-28; I John 4:8-10.

<sup>19</sup> Romans 8:11; II Corinthians 6:14, 15:19-23; III Corinthians 4:10-16, 13:4; Ephesians 1:19-20; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 1:18; I Thessalonians 4:14; I Peter 1:3-4, 3:21.

<sup>20</sup> Romans 6:3-9; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:9-13, 20, 3:1-3.

<sup>21</sup> John 1:11-13; Ephesians 2:4-9; I Peter 1:3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 16:16-17; John 5:21; 6:37, 44; 13:18; 15:16, 19; 17:6-10; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Romans 8:28-35; II Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 1:15-16; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; Colossians 3:12; I Thessalonians 5:9; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Timothy 4:10; II Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; I Peter 1:1-2.

<sup>23</sup> Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 32:4; Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 8:10; John 6:64-65; Romans 9:10-23; 11:5-10; II Corinthians 2:14; III Corinthians 4:3-4; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; I Peter 2:6-9; Jude 1:3-4.

<sup>24</sup> John 7:37-39, 16:7; Acts 4:31; 13:52; II Corinthians 12:3-7, 13; Ephesians 5:18.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 1:2-8; Romans 8:9-11, 26; Galatians 5:16-25; I Thessalonians 5:16-19.

<sup>26</sup> Romans 12:6-8; II Corinthians 12:4-11; I Peter 4:10.

<sup>27</sup> John 5:24; 6:39-40; 10:25-29; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:13-14; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 9:15; I Peter 1:3-5; Jude 1:24.

<sup>28</sup> Proverbs 3:9-10; Mal 3:8-10; Acts 2:42-47; II Corinthians 9:7-11; 14:26; 16:1-2; III Corinthians 9:5-7; Galatians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:16; I Timothy 4:13; II Timothy 3:17-4:2; James 5:14-16; Hebrews 10:23-25.

local church also has the right and duty to keep each member accountable to Christ-like living and to admonish and discipline when necessary.<sup>29</sup> Each local church is called to proclaim the Gospel, through both word and deed, bringing God's light into their communities and the world beyond.<sup>30</sup>

### **11- God has given Baptism and the Lord's Supper to express a believer's union with Christ and spiritual transformation.**

God, recognizing that people are both body and soul, has instructed the Church to administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper as physical expressions of spiritual realities.<sup>31</sup> Upon conversion, believers should receive water Baptism as a public declaration of their faith and a visible testimony of their union with Christ.<sup>32</sup> The Lord's Supper, partaking in the body and blood of Christ, is to be celebrated regularly in the community of believers.<sup>33</sup>

### **12- God values the family unit and organizes his Church to reflect this model, both relationally and structurally.**

God intended the family – husband, wife, and children – to have priority as the initial community where grace is dispensed.<sup>34</sup> Marriage is designed to reflect God's love for his people and childrearing designed to reflect God's nurture for his people.<sup>35</sup> God's people – adults and children, single and married – are joined together according to this model as the family of God.<sup>36</sup> In both the home and church, men are designed to stand in the places of leadership and authority.<sup>37</sup>

### **13- God designs and equips all Christians for ministry and some to lead in the Church as elders and deacons.**

God has given the office of elder/overseer, supported by the office of deacon, to provide primary leadership in the local church.<sup>38</sup> A plurality of elders should share the burden of pastoral care.<sup>39</sup> God intends leadership offices in the church to be filled by men, yet women have equal value in the Kingdom and should be valued equally in the Church.<sup>40</sup> Whether male or female, each person's calling and role differs according to God's design, yet each brings an irreplaceable contribution to healthy church life and ministry.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Matthew 18:15-20; II Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13; 11:1, 27-29; III Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 5:1-2; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; James 5:19-20.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8; 18:4-5; Romans 1:14-16; 10:14-15; II Corinthians 9:16, 19-23; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:2-6; II Peter 3:13-15.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 10:28, 26:26-29, 28:18-20.

<sup>32</sup> Acts 2:38-41, 8:12-13, 35-38, 18:7-8, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:26-28, Colossians 2:11-12.

<sup>33</sup> John 6:53-58; II Corinthians 11:23-29.

<sup>34</sup> Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25, II Corinthians 7:14; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; I Timothy 3:4-5, 12; Hebrews 13:4.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-32; Ezekiel 16:8-15, 32; Hosea 2:16-19, 3:1; 11:1; Luke 5:33-35; 15:11-32; Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 12:5-6; Revelation 19:6-8.

<sup>36</sup> Mark 3:31-35; II Corinthians 7:6-8, 32-35; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19; I Timothy 3:4-5, 12, 15; 5:1-2; I Peter 4:17.

<sup>37</sup> II Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:21-22; Colossians 3:18; I Timothy 2:11-15; 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; 2:4-5; I Peter 3:1.

<sup>38</sup> Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-14; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9.

<sup>39</sup> Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1-5.

<sup>40</sup> Galatians 3:28; I Timothy 3:11; I Peter 3:7.

<sup>41</sup> Luke 8:1-3; Acts 12:12; Romans 12:3-5; 16:1-16; II Corinthians 12:14-26; Philippians 4:2-3; Colossians 4:15.