

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH:**

### **ABORTION**

#### **Preamble**

- We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our inspired, infallible, and inerrant guide. (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Because Holy Scripture speaks to creation and human life, it is imperative that we correctly understand, articulate, and abide by what Holy Scripture teaches on this matter.
- We believe that God has created mankind in His image (Imago Dei) and that human life begins at fertilization. God, in his infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God and to be good and faithful stewards of creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in his mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13). As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14). God has ordained all the days of each person's life before they came to be. (Psalm 139:16).

#### **Religious Beliefs**

Based on Holy Scripture and the historically constant moral teaching of the universal Christian Church, we believe:

- From the moment of fertilization until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God, in His image and likeness.
- From the moment of fertilization, every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the inviolable right to life.
- The right to life and physical integrity of every unborn human life is inviolable—it is not a concession made by society or the state, but is instead inherent to the unborn human life by virtue of its creation in the image of God.
- Because human life begins at the moment of fertilization, it is against our religious and moral conviction to formally or materially cooperate in the termination of unborn human life.
- We are strongly committed to the preservation and defense of unborn human life, which compels our religious, moral, and ethical duty to defend unborn human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or services that have the intent, design, effect, or risk of terminating unborn human life or preventing its implantation and growth post-fertilization.
- The Church and all her ministers and ministries should publicly witness to society and to the state regarding the intrinsic, inherent, and inviolable dignity of all human life, from fertilization to natural death.

## Holy Scripture

In standing against abortion, this church incorporates by reference the following Holy Scriptures (NIV), and statements of the Early Church Fathers.

**Genesis 1:26-27** – Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

**Genesis 25:21-22** – Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

**Exodus 20:13** – You shall not murder.

**Psalms 22:9-10** – Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast on you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

**Psalms 139:13-16** – For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**Isaiah 44:1-2** – This is what the Lord says: he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.

**Isaiah 49:5** – And now the Lord says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength.

**Job 10:8-12** – Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

**Jeremiah 1:4-5** – The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

**Luke 1:39-45** – Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

### Early Church Fathers

“Thus, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremiah: ‘Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.’ If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: ‘And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.’ Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. ‘And before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee.’ Was it, then, a dead body at that stage? Surely it was not, for “God is the God of the living and not the dead.”

—Tertullian, *De Anima*

“It is not permissible for us to destroy the seed by means of illicit manslaughter once it has been conceived in the womb, so long as blood remains in the person.”

—Tertullian, *Apologia*

“Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit? Where there are many efforts at abortion? Where there is murder before the birth.... Why then dost thou abuse the gift of God, and fight with His laws, and follow after what is a curse as if a blessing, and make the chamber of procreation a chamber for murder, and arm the woman that was given for childbearing unto slaughter?”

—John Chrysostom, *Homily 24*

“[T]his lustful cruelty, or if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born.”

—Augustine, *De Nube et Concupiscentia*

“Therefore brothers, you see how perverse they are and hastening wickedness, who are immature, they seek abortion of the conception before the birth; they are those who tell us, ‘I do not see that which you say must be believed.’”

—Augustine, Sermon 126

“Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born.”

—Barnabas, Letter

### **Application**

All of our members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Statement of Faith on Abortion to qualify for involvement with the ministry of this church. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals, and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission, inviting scandal on this church.

This church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, church members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who have endured the tragedy of abortion but are sincerely and resolutely committed to conform their behavior to this church’s Statement of Faith on Abortion.

### **Authority**

Holy Scripture is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle, and conduct. Our Elders are charged with the ministerial responsibility of Biblical interpretation and application as well as determining final matters relating to church policies, Christian practice, faith, divine truth, morality, and theological and doctrinal resolutions.