



Koinonia Evangelical Church  
Church Handbook

We certify this to be the Church Handbook adopted by the members of Koinonia Evangelical Church at a meeting of the members held on the ..... of .....2020.

Chairman: ..... Secretary: .....

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Church Handbook

**Principles for Charity Purposes**

*The Church Constitution*

The Church is established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under a constitution first adopted on ..... 20.., (and last amended on ..... 20.....) (“the Constitution”) which contains the main legal provisions governing the Church, its purposes and Basis of Faith, and its powers. Under the Constitution, the people with the responsibility for the general control and management of the administration of the Church are known as the charity trustees and they are identified in the Constitution by reference to the office they hold in accordance with this handbook.

*The Church Handbook*

This Church Handbook sets out the practices of the Church and its method of internal governance, none of which are contrary to any of the provisions of the Constitution.

*The Church Fellowship*

This Church Handbook sets out the practices of the Church and its method of internal governance, none of which are contrary to any of the provisions of the Constitution.

*The First Church Officers*

The date of the legal establishment of the Church is the date that the Constitution is registered by the Charity Commission (rather than the date on which the Constitution was adopted by the members).

Clause 2.4 contains the provisions for the appointment of Church Officers. The first Church Officers are not appointed but are the people who are listed below. The first Church Officers will hold office for a period of one year commencing on the date of the legal establishment of the Church (“the First Year”) (but they may be removed during the First Year in accordance with the provisions of this handbook and they may be reappointed during the First Year for a term that goes beyond the First Year).

Elder – Don Olden  
Secretary – Bas Jacobs  
Treasurer – Hilary Rushworth  
External Advisor – Tim Abbott

Before the end of the First Year, the charity trustees shall make arrangements for the appointment of Church Officers in accordance with the provisions of clause 2.4 for terms that go beyond the end of the First Year to ensure that there will be Church Officers in office following the expiry of the First Year.

Following the expiry of the First Year, the charity trustees shall produce a new version of this handbook that does not contain this wording covering the first Church Officers, notwithstanding the

clause in this handbook which says that this part of the handbook can only be amended following a change to the Constitution.

## Part 1 – Basis of Faith, Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements

### 1.1 Basis of Faith

The Basis of Faith (see Appendix 1) sets out matters that we believe all Christian believers should be able to accept wholeheartedly and a person can only become a member of the Church if they have indicated that they do accept those beliefs.

### 1.2 Doctrinal Distinctives

We recognise that there are a number of doctrines, not referred to in the Basis of Faith over which genuine Christian believers may take different views. Our Doctrinal Distinctives set out the position and teaching of the Church on these matters. Church members are not required to agree with the matters in the Doctrinal Distinctives and may hold and discuss views to the contrary, but members are required to respect the positions set out in the Doctrinal Distinctives as the teaching of the Church and should not be insistent on their own views or divisive over these matters.

#### 1.2.1 Creation and Evolution

God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, by direct act in six literal days as clearly detailed in the Scriptures (Gen 1:1; John 1:3; Col 1:16-17). Man was created by God directly and in His image; consequently, man did not evolve from lower forms of life (Gen 1:26-27).

#### 1.2.2 Baptism

The ordinance of Believer's Baptism, by immersion, is open to all those who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and wish to obey His command and follow His example. Believer's Baptism is encouraged through the teaching of the Church and is normally expected of members.

#### 1.2.3 The Lords Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is open to all those who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and are at peace with their fellow believers. Partaking in the Lord's Supper is encouraged through the teaching of the Church and is normally expected of members.

#### 1.2.4 The Lord's Day

Observance of the Sabbath Day is a Creational Ordinance (Gen 2:2-3) and reiterated in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:8-11). It is given by God for the well-being of mankind and should be observed by refraining from normal work; this is pleasing to God (Is 58:13-14). Jesus Himself laid down the principles for Sabbath observance (Matt 12:1-14, Mk 2-23-28, Lk 6:1-11). The Biblical pattern is that one day in seven is to be kept holy which provides opportunity for Believers to spend time in fellowship together and corporate worship. This was practised in the New Testament when the Church came together on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) and became the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10). The teaching of the Fellowship, although not specifically prescriptive, is that this day should be set apart and honoured in accordance with Biblical principles.

## 1.3 Ethical Statements

- 1.3.1 Marriage – our Basis of Faith sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice and the Members of the Church agree that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside of marriage between a man and a woman are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales. The Bible also teaches that we must not be actively or passively complicit in sin (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:8-16; 1 Timothy 5:22) and that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). It is therefore part of our doctrine that in relation to any activities of this Church we must in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.
- 1.3.2 Sexuality – The Church adopts the Nashville Statement (see Appendix 3) as our statement on human sexuality.
- 1.4 Amendments to this Part 1 of this Church Handbook shall only be permitted where the provisions of Clause 2.11. have been satisfied.

## Part 2 - Provisions for the Internal Governance of the Church

### 2.1 Members and Membership

- 2.1.1 Clause 2.1 comprises the membership requirements of the Church Handbook referred to in the Constitution.
- 2.1.2 Members of the Church shall be those persons who have confirmed in writing their unreserved agreement to the Basis of Faith and their acceptance of the Constitution and this Church Handbook in its entirety (including the duty of members referred to in the Constitution) and whose Membership has been approved and has not been suspended or terminated, all in accordance with the provisions of this Clause 2.1.
- 2.1.3 Membership brings with it certain privileges and responsibilities. The privileges are identified as membership of the local Body of Christ in all its work and worship, to be able to partake in discussing and agreeing the way in which the local church should move forward and fulfil its Biblical role in the local community and the benefit of Pastoral care. The obligations of membership are to submit to the authority and leadership of the Elders in accordance with the provisions of this Church Handbook and the Constitution, to participate in the work of the Church and its activities, to attend meetings regularly, to bear each other up before the Lord in prayer, and to share in the financial needs of the Church. In particular this will involve:
- a. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
  - b. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
  - c. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
  - d. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
  - e. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
  - f. The showing of Christian love and concern, both for the members of the church family and for the community at large. (John 13:35, 1 Thess. 3:12)

- g. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
- h. Regular attendance at the Lord's Supper – the pattern of frequency being a matter for the individual member to decide. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)

#### Admission to Membership

- 2.1.4 The first Members of the Church are the people who agreed to approve the original version of the Constitution together with the original version of this Church Handbook. (The fact that the first Members voted to approve the Constitution and Church Handbook, including the Basis of Faith means that no further written declaration from them is required).] A person may apply to the Elders to become a Member of the Church and that application, if thought fit, will be put to the Members at a Church Business Meeting for their approval.
- 2.1.5 The Pastor and his wife shall be received into Membership on the taking up of his appointment as Pastor subject to their compliance with Clause 2.1.2.
- 2.1.6 The Church Secretary shall maintain a written register of all Church Members.

#### Termination of Membership

- 2.1.7 A Member may voluntarily resign by submitting in writing a letter to that effect to the charity trustees through the Church Secretary.
- 2.1.8 A Member may be removed from Membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in Clause 2.7.

### **2.2 Baptism**

- 2.2.1 The Doctrinal Distinctives set out the view of the Church with regard to Baptism.
- 2.2.2 Any person wishing to be baptised shall submit their request to the Elders who will arrange for two of their number to interview the applicant. The representatives shall report back to a meeting of the Elders and within their report will be any recommendation as to the mode of Baptism if it is not to be by immersion.
- 2.2.3 An applicant who is to be baptised will be required to give testimony to their faith before the baptism.

### **2.3 The Lord's Supper**

- 2.3.1 The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in thanksgiving for the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. It is a service of remembrance of, and communion with, the risen Lord by those who have been saved.
- 2.3.2 The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated throughout the year at times determined by the Elders. The table shall be open to all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and know Him as their own personal Saviour.

### **2.4 Church Officers**

The Church Officers are the people who hold the roles set out in this Clause 2.4.

## Elders

- 2.4.1 The Elders are entrusted with the Spiritual oversight and leadership of the Church and are responsible, under God, for the ministry to the Church. They are to be men worthy of the office who meet the qualifications as laid down in Scripture (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9)).

Elders are to be appointed by the Church on the recommendation of the serving Elders. If for any reason there are no serving Elders then it will be the responsibility of the Management Team in consultation with the Charity Trustees to recommend suitable candidates to the Church. To be accepted as an Elder the candidate must obtain two thirds of the votes of those present at the meeting.

There is no specific period of service although they should, if possible, take a Sabbatical every seventh year after which they may or may not be re-appointed.

## Deacons

- 2.4.2 Provisions. The Deacons are entrusted with the practical welfare of the Church. They are to be men worthy of the office who meet the qualifications laid down in Scripture. There is no set number of deacons but they may be appointed for particular roles as they arise within the requirements of the Church. The roles in question should be identified by the Elders.

Deacons are to be appointed by the Church after nomination from within the membership. Nominations, with the consent of the person involved, must be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, signed by two members, at least two Sundays before a business meeting.

To be accepted as a Deacon the candidate must obtain two thirds of the votes of those present at the meeting.

A Deacon may serve for three years before standing down, he may however be nominated for re-election. After serving two consecutive periods a deacon should have a Sabbatical year free from office unless this is considered detrimental to the running of the Church. After this Sabbatical period, he may stand for office again.

## Church Secretary and Church Treasurer

- 2.4.3 The Church shall appoint from among the membership a Church Secretary and a Church Treasurer.

The Church Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of notices of any Church Business Meetings and the issuing of all papers and reports to be presented to such meetings. Members shall deliver to the Church Secretary any notice of items of business to be discussed at a Church Business Meeting in sufficient time to enable them to be circulated to all Members before the meeting.

The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Church. Any Member holding any church funds shall account for those funds to the Church Treasurer together with such explanations and documentary evidence as will enable him to incorporate the figures into the church accounts.

## External Advisors

- 2.4.4 An external advisor may be appointed to be a charity trustee and shall be either:
- i) An individual who is regular worshipper at another church and has been appointed as an elder in that congregation or

- ii) an individual whom the Elders consider would provide helpful advice and guidance to the trustees and the church.

## 2.5 Charity Trustees

2.6.1 The Constitution sets out which of the Church Officers are the charity trustees of the Church.

## 2.6 Church Management Team

2.7.1 A Church Management Team consisting of the Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Secretary and organisational leaders should meet at least bi-monthly in order to discuss the practical management of the Church. Other meetings may be called as necessary and other people may be invited to attend as required.

## 2.8 Church Discipline

Removal from membership

2.8.1 Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5 teach that local churches should remove from among them members who refuse to repent of sin. We believe that local churches should always take this action with the aim that it will prompt the person who has been removed from membership to repent so that he or she can be welcomed back into the church and with the aim that it will help to prevent other members from being tempted to follow their example.

2.8.2 A Member of the church may be removed from membership for any of the following reasons:

- a. He or she errs in doctrine so that he or she no longer affirms the Basis of Faith of the Church
- b. He or she is no longer willing to respect the practices and doctrinal positions adopted by the Church set out in Part 1 of this Church Handbook
- c. He or she errs in conduct by committing open sin which brings the church into disrepute
- d. He or she has consistently failed to fulfil the obligations of a member of the church
- e. He or she refuses to repent of sin committed against another Member which has been drawn to his or her attention
- f. He or she has made false and malicious allegations against an Elder, Deacon or other member of the church
- g. He or she is no longer living in submission to the leadership and authority of the Elders of the church

2.8.3 A Member may only be removed from membership by a resolution of the members at Church Business Meeting which has been proposed by the charity trustees of the Church.

2.8.4 The charity trustees shall not propose a resolution to remove a Church Member unless the following steps have been taken:

2.8.4.1 The charity trustees have held a charity trustee disciplinary meeting (“the CTD Meeting”) at which they considered whether or not to propose a resolution to remove the Member (“M”) from membership;

2.8.4.2 The charity trustees have given to M 21 clear days’ notice of the CTD Meeting, informing M why his or her removal from membership is being considered, and inviting the M to make representations to the charity trustees as to why he or she should not be removed from membership;



- 2.8.4.3 The charity trustees allowed the Member to make those representations at the CTD Meeting himself or herself or through his or her representative; and
- 2.8.4.4 The charity trustees took those representations into account when deciding whether to propose a resolution that M be removed from membership.
- 2.8.5 The Member whose removal from Membership is proposed shall be entitled to a reasonable amount time during the meeting at which the Church Members vote on the resolution to remove him or her from membership to address the Members and make such representations as he or she wishes prior to the vote on the resolution.
- 2.8.6 The Member shall be informed of the decision of the Members by the [Church Secretary] and the register of Members amended accordingly where termination of membership is to be applied.
- 2.8.7 A person who has been removed from membership shall be welcomed back into membership if they apply for membership in the normal way and their application is approved.
- 2.8.8 The steps set out at Clauses 2.8.9 to 2.8.11 should also be followed prior to the CTD Meeting taking place, but failure to follow those steps will not invalidate a resolution of the Members to remove a person from Membership.
- 2.8.9 The Elders must be informed where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in Clause 2.8.2 apply to a Member of the Church. Where a person's behaviour is being reported by a Member who has been sinned against by the person he or she is reporting, that Member should normally raise the issue first with the person concerned and only report it to the Elders if the two persons concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves.
- 2.8.10 Where the Elders are informed or they themselves believe that any of the reasons at Clause 2.8.2 apply to a Member, they shall appoint two persons of spiritual maturity to meet with the Member to enquire into the matter and to investigate the matter thoroughly, and where appropriate to encourage the Member against whom the allegations have been made to repent.
- 2.8.11 After the persons appointed under Clause 2.8.10 have investigated the matter and have met with the Member against whom the allegations have been made (or the Member has been given reasonable opportunity to meet and has refused), they shall report back to the Elders who shall decide whether it is necessary for a CTD Meeting to be held and what additional steps they should take (if any).
- 2.8.12 Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Elders may still be required to report the facts arising from the investigation to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases the Elders shall give to the Member concerned all the support that is appropriate for a Member who is genuinely repentant.

#### Additional Disciplinary Measures

- 2.8.13 Whenever the Members vote to remove a person from membership, they may also resolve to impose any of the following the measures:
- a. a restriction from attending or taking part in any or all of the meetings of the Church, including meetings or activities that are normally open to the public;

- b. the remaining Members may be required not to have any association with the person who has been dismissed from membership in accordance with clear and specific guidance from the Elders as to what is required in this regard.

2.8.14 Any of the measures at Clause 2.8.13 may be removed by a resolution of the Elders.

- *A person who remains a member must be allowed to vote at Church Business Meetings.*
- *We do not recommend excluding a person from participating in the Lord's Supper without also excluding them from membership.*
- *There is general obligation on members to submit to the leadership and authority of the Elders.*
- *The Elders could, require a member who is struggling with a particular sin to take particular steps which they believe are necessary to enable that member overcome that issue.*

## **2.9 Church Business Meetings**

2.9.1 The provisions for Church business meetings are set out in the Constitution under the Clauses headed "Members' decisions" and "General meetings of members". A "general meeting of members" under the Constitution is referred to as a "Church Business Meeting" in this Church Handbook.

Decisions covering any matters that are listed in Appendix 2 to this Church Handbook require the approval of the church members at a Church Business Meeting by the majorities set out in Appendix 2 for them to be recognised as decisions of the Church.

## **2.9 Church Fellowship Meetings**

2.9.2 In addition to normal business meetings, Fellowship meetings may be called at the discretion of the Elders. These meetings may include the wider fellowship of believers rather than just the membership and should be seen as a forum for promoting discussion amongst the Church as a whole.

These meetings will not make any decisions in respect of the Church.

## **2.10 Church Safeguarding Policy**

2.9.1 The charity trustees shall operate a church safeguarding policy and shall ensure that activities involving children and vulnerable adults are carried out in accordance with that policy.

2.9.2 Each person overseeing church activities involving children or vulnerable adults and every charity trustee shall complete a DBS check. A record of the DBS certificate number should be held on record by the safeguarding policy administrator.

## **2.10 Exclusion of Non-Members From Public Meetings of the Church**

2.10.1 The Elders may propose that the open invitation to attend public meetings of the Church customarily extended to non-members may be withdrawn from any individual who seeks to obstruct the carrying out of the work and ministry of the Church, or to undermine the leadership of the Church.

2.10.2 Subject to Clauses 2.8.13 and 2.8.14 the Elders may only withdraw such open invitation to an individual if this is supported by a vote of 75% of Members present and voting at a Church Business Meeting.

2.10.3 An invitation that has been withdrawn may be reinstated by a resolution of the Elders recommendation to the members at a Church Business Meeting.

## **2.11 Amendment of the Church Handbook**

2.11.1 Other than the section headed “Principles for Charity Purposes”, any provisions of this Church Handbook can be amended by the charity trustees under the authority of a resolution of the Members of the Church approving such a change at a Church Business Meeting, provided that the proposed amendment shall not be such as would cause the Church to lose its charitable status or such as would cause this Church Handbook to be inconsistent with the Constitution. The section headed “Principles for Charity Purposes” can only be amended where this is required because the provisions of the Constitution have changed.

2.11.2 A majority of [60]% of those Members present and voting at the Church Business Meeting is required to approve a proposed amendment to any clause excepting (i) any provision of this Church Handbook requiring the approval of a matter by percentage of the Members which is greater than a simple majority of the Members present and voting a Church Business Meeting, in which case the majority required to amend that provisions shall be the greater of (a) 75% of Members present and voting a Church Business Meeting and (b) the majority required by the provision itself as currently drafted, (ii) the provisions contained in Part 1 of this Church Handbook where a majority of [75]% is required, and (iii) the provisions in the section headed “Principles for Charity Purposes” where the charity trustees shall make the amendment without the need for a vote following any change to the Constitution.

2.11.3 Notice of any proposed amendment together with the specific wording of the proposed change must be given in writing to all Church Members at least [3] weeks before the meeting at which the proposal will be put to the vote.

2.11.4 No amendment may be made under this Clause to any provision of the Constitution, including the Basis of Faith.

## BASIS OF FAITH

The following Statement of Faith has been adopted from the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC).

- **God**

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in His holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the Almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all the things according to His sovereign will for His own glory.
- **The Bible**

God has revealed Himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.
- **The Human Race**

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please Him.
- **The Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all His words are true. On the cross He died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by His blood. He rose from the dead and in His resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for His people in the presence of the Father.
- **Salvation**

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the Gospel. God in His love forgives sinners whom He calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.
- **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.
- **The Church**

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, where the congregations of believers are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for pastoral care and discipline and for evangelism. The unity of the body is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the Gospel.
- **Baptism And The Lord's Supper**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the Gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His Church but does not impart spiritual life. The

Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

- **The Future**

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy and fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

## MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL AT A CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

The table below sets out the decisions that need to be approved by Church Members at a Church Business Meeting. Some items within the table simply reproduce requirements that are set out elsewhere in the Constitution or Church Rules (“Type A Items”). Other items cover decisions which are only required to be approved by Church Members by virtue of having been included in this table (“Type B Items”). Type A Items will be amended whenever the relevant provision of the Constitution or Church Rules is amended. Type B Items may be amended in accordance with clause 2.11.2.

	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Majority required</b>
1	To allow a Church Business Meeting to proceed on short notice (Constitution - 11.3.2)	90% of all Church Members
2	To amend the Constitution (Constitution - 27.1)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
3	To amend the Basis of Faith (Constitution - 27.3)	80% of all Church Members
4	To wind up the Church (Constitution - 28)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
5	Approval of an application for Membership	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
6	Appointment of an Elder	67% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
7	Removal of an Elder from office	67% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
8	Appointment of a Deacon	67% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
9	Removal of a Deacon from office	67% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting
10	Expenditure over £500 to be approved at a members meeting.	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Business Meeting

## THE NASHVILLE STATEMENT

**Article 1**

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

**Article 2**

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

**Article 3**

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

**Article 4**

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

**Article 5**

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

**Article 6**

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

**Article 7**

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

**Article 8**

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in

purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

#### **Article 9**

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality—a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behaviour.

#### **Article 10**

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

#### **Article 11**

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonour God's design of his image bearers as male and female.

#### **Article 12**

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

#### **Article 13**

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

#### **Article 14**

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Saviour, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.