**Statement of Faith**

Friends’ beliefs are grounded in the essentials of Christianity as found in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the New Testament writers. Foundational truths rest in the Fatherhood of God; the deity and humanity of Jesus the Son; the ministry of the Holy Spirit; the atonement of Jesus Christ, which reconciles humankind to God; the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which assures faithful believers of eternal life after physical death; Jesus Christ, the High Priest, who provides the believer direct access to the Father because of His death and resurrection; and the individual priesthood of believers, who may boldly approach the throne of grace with confidence to receive mercy and help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). While Friends do not stress a formal written creed, they do state the primary principles of their faith in order to make their doctrinal position clear. The statement of faith of Friends may be summarized as follows:

* The Bible is the inspired rule of faith and subject to the Holy Spirit’s interpretation.
* God is sovereign.
* Jesus Christ provided the atoning sacrifice for the sins of humankind through His death and resurrection.
* The Holy Spirit leads men and women in the experience of salvation.
* Humanity is sinful but redeemable.
* Salvation encompasses the works of both forgiveness and sanctification.
* The Church is the physical expression of the Kingdom of God on earth under
* The Headship of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the Church will be realized in the final resurrection and final judgment of humankind.
* Communion with God and baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit are spiritual realities that go beyond outward sacramental expressions.
* Christian witness is given through word and deed. Following are amplifications of the subjects mentioned above.

# The Bible

The Holy Bible was given to humankind by direct inspiration of God. It issufficient to inform men and women of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. God’sHoly Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures, also

interprets them, working through thoseyielded to Him within His Church. The Bible is the final authority by which all guidance should be measured for truth. Genuine guidance from God is in accord with the Holy Scriptures.

# God

There is one sovereign God who is revealed through the Bible in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. God is the Creator and Preserver of all things. He alone is worthy of worship. In the unity of the Godhead exist three equal and distinct, yet inseparable persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

# Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is God’s revelation of Himself to

Humankind. Jesus, at once wholly divine and wholly human, was conceived by God’s

Spirit and born of a virgin. Through His blood shed in crucifixion, Jesus Christ became the atonement for the sins of humankind, providing direct access to God. Following His resurrection from the dead, Jesus ascended again to the right hand of the Father. Scripture refers to Christ as High Priest of all believers, who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way, just as we are— yet was without sin. Jesus Christ serves as Mediator and Intercessor for His beloved and, through the work of His Spirit, draws all persons to Himself. When Jesus Christ returns to earth in all His glory, He will receive the Church and judge the world.

# The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and is equal with them. His work in the world includes convicting of sin, giving life to penitent believers, and Sanctifying the children of God. He teaches and enables men, women, and children to love God supremely and to give evidence of the Spirit’s presence in their lives. The Holy Spirit works through individual lives as well as in corporate groups of the church, enabling service in various ways as He chooses.

# Humanity

Humankind was created in the image of God to enjoy unbroken fellowship with their Maker. The first man Adam, along with his wife Eve, sinned against God causing His displeasure and the penalty of death. Since that time all people are born with a sinful nature. However, through Christ’s atoning work on the cross and because of the resurrection, men and women may be redeemed from the penalty of sin and death. Christ paid the penalty in full. Through His sacrificial death, Jesus Christ destroyed the wall separating humankind from God.

# Salvation

Salvation is a personal matter between an individual and God. It encompasses both the works of forgiveness for sin and sanctification—the cleansing of the sinful nature. A person may be redeemed because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the direct work of the Spirit. An individual is saved when, in response to God’s grace, he or she makes a personal choice to accept the provision Christ

made through His death on the cross. There is no principle of election or security which removes from humankind the responsibility of free will. It is the Holy Spirit who restores fellowship with God the Father and enables us to love Him wholeheartedly. Salvation does not depend on outward ceremonies or symbols.

Sanctification is the setting apart of the believer by God for transformational service and spiritual worship through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. A person is sanctified by the participation in the death of Christ through the baptism of the Spirit. Sanctification is an act of cleansing and a process by which one’s life is continuously devoted to God’s purposes. Through this process increasing growth and maturity are realized.

# Baptism and Communion

Practices of the outward ordinances of baptism and communion are incomplete without the actual working of the Holy Spirit and fellowship with Christ that comes through sacramental living. Friends believe all of life is sacred. Friends view the outward ceremonies as unnecessary practices and would call

the Church to ensure the spiritual realities before any ceremonies are performed. Therefore, most Friends do not practice the outward ceremonies although they are acceptable when the realities are understood, just as wedding ceremonies and baby dedications are acceptable within the life of the Church.

# The Church

Those who repent of their sinful way of life and trust in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and as Savior of the world enter into the Kingdom of God by the work of the Holy Spirit. These people are corporately called the Church of Jesus Christ and include believers worldwide. By the Spirit, Christ is present wherever two or three meet together in His name. Such a meeting is a local church which is a visible manifestation of the Church worldwide. Every believer should actively participate in a local, visible part of Christ’s worldwide body in order to worship, witness, and work more effectively for the glory of God. Friends consider meetings for business to be extensions of the corporate worship experience of the Church. Every believer is committed to be involved in the stewardship of God’s Kingdom through the Church until the Lord returns.

# Christian Worship and Work

Scripture calls Christians to meet together for the privilege of corporate worship. By doing so, they testify to others of their faith in Christ and also receive the mutual benefits of encouragement, teaching, and fellowship. Worship may be silent or vocal, taking various forms. It does not depend on certain ceremonies or traditions. Worship is a natural outgrowth of union with Christ and should be directed by His Spirit. Friends emphasize that Christ may be known experientially through the Holy Spirit and hold that He is present to lead His people Himself. Though Friends worship has been known for its silent worship, in reality, it is not worship in silence but worship on the basis of obedience to God.

The emphasis is on the ministry of each individual in the body of Christ and the importance of each one ministering to the spiritual needs of others according to the direction of the Holy Spirit. It is extremely important that the believer enter into worship as a participant in the communal life of the Church rather than as an observer who has come to listen to a sermon or to repeat certain phrases. Every meeting should be an adventure in which God speaks to His people. Friends encourage daily private and family worship in addition to the times of corporate worship.

Believers are committed to the work of God, not only to manifest personal righteousness as the fruit of a new life, but also to share their faith. All Christians arecalled upon to witness by word and deed in a Christ - like demonstration of love, forgiveness, and peace. Believers are called and ordained by God for special services of leadership in the Church. These services may include ministries of teaching, evangelization, pastoring, or administration. The Church should recognize and encourage the giftedness of its members.

# Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the indwelling agent of leadership for each Christian. The Spirit always leads in harmony with Scripture. Growth and maturity come as the Spirit is allowed to control the individual life producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Spiritual gifts are also given by the Spirit for the encouragement and edification of the Body of Christ. While each gift is Spirit-given, Friends emphasize seeking the Giver of the gifts over and above seeking specific gifts.

As believers receive gifts, love will provide the motivation for the best use of each one. Supernatural gifts do not constitute the essential sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit with love as the foundation.

# The Lord’s Return

Jesus Christ will return in power as King of kings and Lord of lords at a time appointed by God to consummate His rule over all humanity in the final triumph over Satan. The dead shall be resurrected, some to eternal life, others to everlasting punishment. All shall be judged by God and receive just recompense for their deeds. True believers shall live forever with Christ, but the lost will suffer eternally in hell.

# Liberty

Scripture calls Christians to freedom in Christ. Because of this freedom, there may be differences of faith and practice among God’s children. However, Scripture also recognizes the distinctions between liberty in personal belief and practice versus liberty in public teaching and preaching. Persons in public ministry among Friends must teach in accordance with love and respect for the larger body of Friends, using these Basic Beliefs as a foundation for ministry.

Faith in Action

The rights of individuals regarding freedom of action must be maintained. But it is the duty of the church to give certain guidelines to its members, warning against whatever may interfere with the best development of Christian character. Rather than stress restrictions, Friends would emphasize positive principles for putting faith into practice.

# Prayer

Prayer is the avenue God has provided for His children to commune directly with Him. The life devoted to prayer results in an ongoing, growing relationship with God. An intimate relationship with God cannot be achieved without prayer as a foundational aspect of the Christian life. Before seeking to live out the Christian life in this world, the believer must know God. Knowing God in this sense goes far beyond knowing who God is or knowing about God. Rather the believer seeks the heart of God through prayer

so that he or she may learn to hear God’s voice and follow in obedience to God’s leading. Seeking the face of God through prayer should be both an individual and a corporate act of worship.

# Personal Integrity

The faithful believer will witness to the life of Christ within. Following are examples of this witness concerning matters of personal integrity.

*The believer:*

* Conducts personal, family, business, and civic responsibilities with honesty;
* Refrains from offensive or profane speech and from swearing to legal oaths;
* Tells the truth whether under oath or not; and
* Refrains from membership in secret organizations whose charter requires secrecy regarding the activities of the organization.

# Stewardship

Friends believe that the Old Testament practice of giving one-tenth (a tithe) of personal income for Kingdom ministry is a foundational principle for Christian stewardship. Jesus’s command for sacrificial giving exceeds this principle, and New Testament writers teach that true giving goes beyond the tithe. Time, talent, and treasure belong to the Lord. Believers are called to be good stewards of all the gifts of life God has given.

*Friends are urged to:*

* Refrain from gambling which includes lotteries;
* Make their wills while healthy and with sound judgment so that distribution of property may be done in justice, with wisdom, and to the satisfaction of their own minds;
* Consider the financial needs of the ministries of the local church and the Yearly Meeting, as well as worthy parachurch organizations, in the practice of stewardship, which includes tithes, offerings, wills, and estates;
* Consider the stewardship of gifts of ministry and stewardship of the earth.

# Marriage and Family

Marriage is ordained by God for the ordering of the human family in love and discipline and, therefore, should be entered into with reverence. Marriage is a lifelong commitment and should not be broken. If divorce occurs, the local meeting should offer restorative ministry for all family members. Persons, who have divorced but are living consistent Christian lives, should not be hindered from being members of the meeting with all rights and privileges.

# Regard for Mind and Body

Scripture calls the body the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Friends encourage believers to dedicate their bodies to wholesome practices rather than to evil or unwholesome activities. Following are examples of wholesome practices:

* Recreation is essential to the mind and body and an uplift to the spirit. Refrain from amusements that may hinder or conflict with the life in Christ.
* Use propriety and modesty in attire. Refrain from trends that condone or foster sexual promiscuity or the absence of moral responsibility.
* Use medicines carefully, following the physician’s instructions. Refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages, habit-forming drugs, and tobacco.

# Peace and Nonviolence

The teachings of Jesus, the whole spirit of His gospel, and the provisions of His grace call men and women to live at peace with one another. Life is sacred; therefore, war and violence are not consistent with the practice of Christian holiness to which believers are called by Christ. Members are encouraged to find nonviolent methods for achieving civil justice and the reparation of wrongs. An alternative to military service is to use the provision of the Selective Service Act in order to perform alternative civilian services.

Jesus taught that disciples should love one another. He consistently modeled loving actions. Jesus came to serve and to save. He challenges Friends to do the same. Violence can take the form of physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, and manipulation. In the home, schools, and neighborhoods, with family, friends, or strangers, each person chooses how to relate and respond to one another. Even in those situations where one believes he or she is being wronged, Jesus calls for a response with nonviolent, prayerful methods. Peace must start in the home.

# Abortion

Married people, single mothers, and pregnant teenagers have tremendous needs when facing an unwanted pregnancy. It is the position of Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting that the gospel of Jesus Christ mandates advocacy on behalf of those who are faced with an unwanted pregnancy. It is position of the Yearly Meeting that it is God’s will to offer a practical ministry through education, discipleship, reconciliation, and extended help to meet the needs of mothers who might turn to abortion when their children will be born into families that are not prepared or willing to care for them. Release for adoption is a positive option in such situations.

Friends recognize and affirm only one Authority. In the matter of abortion, it is the Yearly Meeting’s firm conviction that life begins at conception. God is the Creator of life. The practice of abortion violates the will of God and is, therefore, sinful.

Friends recognize and affirm God’s forgiveness and grace which covers those who sin, either by withholding ministry from pregnant women, or by aborting their own or another’s baby. May the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin, comfort all who face an unwanted pregnancy. May His people offer His grace, truth, and practical ministry in such situations.

# Human Sexuality

God as Creator created male and female in His image. According to Scripture, sexuality is a symbol of the relationship between God and the Church, the Bride of Christ. Friends in Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting believe there is an objective truth regarding homosexuality. This truth may be found in Scripture and from various sources which do not conflict with the Bible. Appropriate sexuality is to be expressed through the joining of one biologically born man and one biologically born woman in marriage. Any

other expression of eroticized sexuality is considered inappropriate, outside of God’s will, and therefore sinful.

Human beings as fallen creatures, manifest their sinfulness in many ways, including within the expression of their sexuality. The provision of forgiveness and grace is available for all people, regardless of their sin, dependent only on their relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, etc. are to be welcomed into Friends fellowships and offered the ministry of discipleship and reconciliation as it is offered to any other person. Any lesser treatment of these persons is to judge and condemn God’s creation, which is also outside of God’s will and, therefore, sinful. All sexual sin separates from God and cannot be endorsed; including the exclusion of local church membership.

# The Christian and the State

In matters of religious doctrine and worship, all people are accountable only to God. These truths are plainly declared in the New Testament and confirmed by the whole scope of the Gospel. To rule over the conscience and to command the allegiance of humanity are the high and sacred prerogatives of the Creator God. Friends maintain that it is the duty of Christians to obey the enactments of civil government, except those which interfere with allegiance to God. Through the civil government, Friends enjoy liberty and protection in connection with law and order. Civil government is a divine ordinance, instituted to promote the best welfare of humankind. Friends respect and submit to the government within its proper function.

Historically, Friends have willingly submitted to the penalties incurred as a result of remaining true to conscience and allegiance to God. Scripture commands Christians to pray for those in authority which includes the civil government.

# Capital Punishment

The Bible emphasizes the sanctity of human life and the worth of each person before God. Friends believe capital punishment (the death penalty) to be a preemptive judgement of the authority of God as the righteous Judge over all of life. Friends are encouraged to seek or endorse alternative methods of punishment for violent crimes.

# Human Equality

As a demonstration of belief in the value of all human life, Friends encourage active participation in efforts to bring reconciliation and healing where there is discrimination.

*Friends seek:*

* To respect the dignity and worth of all people before God;
* To bind up the hurts of those who suffer injuries due to prejudicial behavior; and
* To break down the barriers created by the prejudice of sinful humanity.

# Women in Ministry

Friends recognize that the Holy Spirit will distribute spiritual gifts as He wills in the Church. Therefore, men and women may receive any and all gifts the Spirit gives. Friends believe it is the role of the Church to affirm and confirm giftedness and to free men and women to serve as they are called, according to

their giftedness. God’s ordination of women for public ministry has been recognized and recorded among Friends since the 1600s. Women serve as pastors, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, speakers, and in various roles of leadership and responsibility.