

Highland United Methodist Church Statement of Faith

MISSION STATEMENT

“It is our mission to make Disciples of Jesus Christ”

VISION STATEMENT

To be a caring community in which Christian values enrich the human experience for individuals and families through a program of worship, education, service, and fellowship that reflects diversity, responds to the needs of people everywhere, and is relevant to changing issues and demands within those Christian principles when defined by John Wesley's Four Sources of Authority For Our Faith... Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience.

Who Are United Methodists?

United Methodists Are A Global Church...

United Methodist Congregations are connected to churches all over the world.

A Diverse Community...

All persons are welcomed into the United Methodist Church. We celebrate a diversity of people, ideas, and cultures.

Biblical in Faith...

Our faith is guided by Scripture, traditions, reason, and experience. Scripture is of paramount importance in our guidance.

Mission Oriented, Socially Conscious...

We are aware of world events and strive to help those in need.

Ecumenical...

For generations, United Methodists have cooperated with other churches to spread the gospel, care for those in need, alleviate injustice and foster peace. In national and interfaith groups, United Methodists reach beyond our own churches and our own communities to express concern and to share God's love with people of many faiths.

Involved...

For more than 200 years, the United Methodist Church has expressed concern for the worker, the sick, the poor, the orphaned, the aging, the impaired, the oppressed, and the imprisoned.

Our church participates in the struggles of women, people with physical and mental impairments, and racial and ethnic minority persons, helping them attain equality in the church, the economy, and society.

United Methodists positively influence society through responsible social action.

Connectional...

United Methodism took form as an organized church in this country during the revolutionary period of our history. Its structures parallel those of the United States government. Church

leadership is shared by executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Representative bodies carry out church functions at local, regional, and church-wide levels.

Evangelical...

The United Methodist Church continues its strong evangelical heritage. We believe each congregation should be a vital center of biblical study and evangelism - a blending of personal piety and discipleship.

Our Beliefs as United Methodists

With Christians of other communions we confess belief in the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This confession embraces the biblical witness to God's activity in creation, encompasses God's gracious self-involvement in the dramas of history, and anticipates the consummation of God's reign.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Baptism...

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and the mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

Communion...

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Scripture...

United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace. We are convinced that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God in our midst whom we trust in life and death.

Tradition...

The story of the church reflects the most basic sense of tradition, the continuing activity of God's Spirit transforming human life. Tradition is the history of that continuing environment of grace in and by which all Christians live, God's self-giving love in Jesus Christ. As such, tradition transcends the story of particular traditions.

Reason...

Although we recognize that God's revelation and our experiences of God's grace continually surpass the scope of human language and reason, we also believe that any disciplined theological work calls for the careful use of reason. By reason we read and interpret Scripture. By reason we determine whether our Christian witness is clear. By reason we ask questions of faith and seek to understand God's action and will.

Experience...

Some facets of human experience tax our theological understanding. Many of God's people live in terror, hunger, loneliness, and degradation. Everyday experiences of birth and death, of growth and life in the created world, and an awareness of wider social relations also belong to serious theological reflection.

A new awareness of such experiences can inform our appropriation of scriptural truths and sharpen our appreciation of the good news of the Kingdom of God.

A Triune God...

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The Father...

We believe in the one true, holy and living God, Eternal Spirit, who is Creator, Sovereign and preserver of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, and rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of men, to the glory of his name. We believe the one God reveals Himself as the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power.

The Son...

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. He is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As ministering Servant he lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to be with the Father, from whence he shall return. He is eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us, and by him all men will be judged.

The Holy Spirit...

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from and is one in being with the Father and the Son. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads men through faithful response to the gospel in to the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth.

Prevenient Grace...

We acknowledge God's prevenient grace, the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses. This grace prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God's will, and our "first slight transient conviction" of having sinned against God.

God's grace also awakens in us an earnest longing for deliverance from sin and death and moves us toward repentance and faith.

Justification and Assurance...

We believe God reaches out to the repentant believer in justifying grace with accepting and pardoning love. Wesleyan theology stresses that a decisive change in the human heart can and does occur under the prompting of grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In justification we are, through faith, forgiven our sin and restored to God's favor. This righting of relationships by God through Christ calls forth our faith and trust as we experience regeneration, by which we are made new creatures in Christ.

This process of justification and new birth is often referred to as conversion. Such a change may be sudden and dramatic, or gradual and cumulative. It marks a new beginning, yet it is part of an ongoing process. Christian experience as personal transformation always expresses itself as faith working by love.

Our Wesleyan theology also embraces the scriptural promise that we can expect to receive assurance of our present salvation as the Spirit "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

Sanctification and Perfection...

We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Faith and Good Works...

We believe good works are the necessary fruits of faith and follow regeneration but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment. We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith, for through and by them faith is made evident.

Nurture and Mission of the Church...

Finally, we emphasize the nurturing and serving function of Christian fellowship in the church. The personal experience of faith is nourished by the worshiping community.

For Wesley there is no religion but social religion, no holiness but social holiness. The communal forms of faith in the Wesleyan tradition not only promote personal growth; they also equip and mobilize us for mission and service to the world.

The outreach of the church springs from the working of the Spirit. As United Methodists, we respond to that working through a connectional polity based upon mutual responsiveness and accountability. Connectional ties bind us together in faith and service in our global witness, enabling faith to become active in love and intensifying our desire for peace and justice in the world.

Service to the World...

We insist that personal salvation always involves Christian mission and service to the world. By joining heart and hand, we assert that personal religion, evangelical witness, and Christian social action are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing.

Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world.

The General Rules represent one traditional expression of the intrinsic relationship between Christian life and thought as understood within the Wesleyan tradition. Theology is the servant of piety, which in turn is the ground of social conscience and the impetus for social action and global interaction, always in the empowering context of the reign of God.