

## **Statement of Welcome and Inclusion**

### **A Resolution of the Raleigh Moravian Church Board**

**Whereas**, as proclaimed by our congregation's Mission Statement: called by God as the Body of Christ we -- the members of Raleigh Moravian Church, a family of believers -- worship, teach, witness, and serve in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit;<sup>1</sup>

**Whereas**, as Moravians, we proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and acknowledge Him as the Chief Elder and leader of our Church;

**Whereas**, we proclaim God as Creator of heaven and earth, of all people as God's Children, and of all life, in its richness, abundance, and diversity;

**Whereas**, we proclaim the Holy Spirit affecting the living belief in the heart of every believer and leading us to the recognition of sin and to the acceptance of the redemption achieved by Christ;<sup>2</sup>

**Whereas**, we recognize the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel, but also know that the mystery of Jesus Christ, which is attested to in the Bible, cannot be comprehended completely by any human mind or expressed completely in any human statement;<sup>3</sup>

**Whereas**, we believe that Scripture should be understood as a whole, in context, and in a way that is coherent and consistent with the teaching and life of our Lord Jesus Christ;<sup>4</sup>

**Whereas**, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ during the time he walked on Earth serve as a guide to our understanding of Scripture and to the life and ministry of our church in the current age;

**Whereas**, Jesus Christ, in His ministry, welcomed all believers and preached and ministered specifically to those whose identity was outside that of the Jewish majority and traditional cultural norms of His time;

**Whereas**, the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to all people, Jew and Gentile, East and West, North and South, without regard to different physical characteristics or attributes that might otherwise separate us;<sup>5</sup>

**Whereas**, we seek to follow Jesus in serving His brothers and sisters. Like the love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore we pray the Lord ever anew to point out to us the way to reach our neighbors, opening our hearts and hands to them in their need;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> RMC Mission Statement.

<sup>2</sup> Ground of the Unity, <http://www.moravian.org/the-moravian-church/ground-of-the-unity/>, "Personal Belief."

<sup>3</sup> Ground of the Unity, "God's Word and Doctrine."

<sup>4</sup> See Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation, adopted Southern Province P.E.C. 3/5/12, [http://www.moravian.org/images/moravian/PDFs/Guiding\\_Principles\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Interpretation.pdf](http://www.moravian.org/images/moravian/PDFs/Guiding_Principles_of_Biblical_Interpretation.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See Ground of the Unity, "The Church as a Fellowship."

<sup>6</sup> Ground of the Unity, "Serving our Neighbor."

**Whereas**, we carry Christ's message that our community of believers is open to all and includes any and all persons who want to join and worship with us, and we believe that our differences, great or small, bring strength to our congregation and our community;

**Whereas**, our congregation should be a place where every follower of Christ can feel safe and can love and be loved at all times;<sup>7</sup> and

**Whereas**, as a congregation that cares about the treatment of all of our brothers and sisters, we, as a church, desire to be a safe, open, inclusive, affirming, and welcoming place for everyone and to allow full rights of membership and of participation by all members in the available ministries, rites, and sacraments of our church regardless of race, gender identity, age, national origin, or sexual orientation;<sup>8</sup>

**Therefore,**

**Be it resolved that:**

We affirm every person's value as a child of God;

**Be it further resolved, that**

We welcome all children of God and followers of Christ to join and worship with us and participate in the life of our congregation, regardless of their race, gender identity, age, national origin, or sexual orientation. Accordingly, considerations of race, gender identity, age, national origin, or sexual orientation shall not be considerations for admitting persons into our church's membership or leadership;<sup>9</sup>

**Be it further resolved, that**

God's spirit in our presence has directed our congregation to minister to the needs of all who join and worship with us. This ministry includes the opportunity of all our church members, regardless of race, gender identity, age, national origin, or sexual orientation, to participate in rites (confirmation, marriage) and sacraments (baptism, communion), as administered or directed by the pastor, and to use the church buildings and property for such rites and sacraments, in the judgment and discretion of the pastor and according to church policy;<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, Sec. 13 ("Since disciples of Jesus are to be known by the love they have to one another, we will cherish Christian love as of prime importance.")

<sup>8</sup> See Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, Sec. 29 ("We will not hate, despise, slander, or otherwise injure anyone. We will ever strive to manifest love towards all people, to treat them in a kind and friendly manner, and in our dealings with them to approve ourselves upright, honest, and conscientious, as becomes children of God. Together with the universal Christian Church, we have a concern for this world, opening our heart and hand to our neighbors with the message of the love of God, and being ever ready to minister of our substance to their necessities."); *see also* Resolution #13 approved by the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province ("any congregation retains the right to make opinions related to LGBTQ+ issues known . . .").

<sup>9</sup> See Resolution #14 approved by the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province (Leadership Roles and Diversity of Views) affirming the roles of pastors and Church Boards to make these determinations with regards to the rights and participation of LGBTQ+ members within each congregation and the use of church buildings and property.

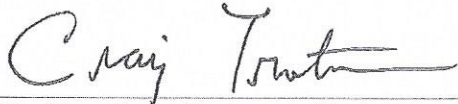
**Be it further resolved, that**

We continue to strive to discern God's will for our individual lives and for our church, according to the leading of the Holy Spirit; and

**Be it further resolved, that**

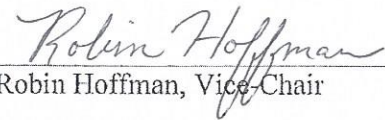
These values and beliefs reflect our congregation at Raleigh Moravian Church, and we share them with the hope that the greater Moravian church can remain united without being uniform, so that we all may adhere to the ideal, "in all things, love."<sup>10</sup>

Adopted this the 13th day of August, 2018.



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The Rev. Craig Troutman, Chair



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Robin Hoffman, Vice-Chair

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<sup>10</sup> See Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, Sec. 14 ("We will be eager to maintain the unity of the Church .... the unity and togetherness created by God who made us one. How well we accomplish this will be a witness to our community as to the validity of our faith.").