

Statement of Belief and Purpose of St. Michael's Episcopal Church

(Revised January, 2011; edited June, 2017)

As a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas, we the people of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, set forth this Statement of Belief and Purpose. This revision of the 1989 Statement of Belief and Purpose responds to the challenge of the Rt. Rev. Larry E. Maze to the people of God in this diocese to be "Called forth by the Great Commandment and Sent out by the Great Commission," acknowledges our desire to reflect the fullness of God, and attempts to be inclusive of all people in the language we use.

I We believe that the worship of God in Jesus Christ is our highest calling, the means by which our purposes are brought into accordance with God's desire for us and for the world, and that worship is our source of power to be God's people in the world. Therefore we will make worship the center of our life together from which we are sent into the world renewed in body, mind, strength, and spirit.

II We believe that St. Michael's is a Christian community in which we may come to know each other, respond effectively to one another's needs, practice forgiveness and reconciliation, and value and affirm the gifts for ministry of each member. Therefore, we will practice mutual ministry among the St. Michael's community, and we will provide opportunities for each member's commitment to be offered and affirmed.

III We believe the mission of the Church is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world so that all people may be united in the love of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we will present the healing, reconciling love of Jesus Christ our Savior and we will live our lives in accordance with the Great Commandment, which is to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

IV We believe all persons are one in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we welcome all who wish to be baptized or who wish to live out their Christian faith in this community by practicing the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church. We seek to remove every barrier to full participation in our corporate life. We offer hospitality to everyone. We will go out and make disciples by sharing the story of our faith as experienced in this Christian community and inviting others to come and see.

V We believe that God intends for us to be responsible Christians as well as responsible citizens of a community in a rapidly changing and complex world. Therefore, we understand that every person has an obligation to support God's work through the Church by the tithing of time, talents, and money; we will use God's gifts constructively both in personal ministry of time and money, and in financial support of the Church and in the world; and we will strive to make the Church a source of informed counsel and guidance for our life in the world, as well as a meeting place where diverse ideas can be explored in love and mutual respect; we will promote a keen concern for, and involvement in, community affairs; and we will make our facilities available to meet the needs of the larger community in which we live.

VI We believe that we are called to be mindful and thoughtful in the expression of our faith. Therefore, we will strive to nourish our minds as well as our hearts with God's wisdom and to bear witness to our faith from generation to generation by offering to every person a program of Christian Formation reaching to every level of age and experience within this congregation.

VII We believe that this congregation, as an Episcopal Church, is a small part of God's faithful family throughout the world and derives its existence and function under the spiritual care of our Bishops. Therefore, we will participate fully in the work of the Diocese of Arkansas through our clergy and lay persons and offer our cooperation to Episcopal Churches of our community so that together we may exercise a responsible community presence.

VIII We believe that all members should understand the concerns which guide our congregation. Therefore, this Statement of Belief and Purpose will be presented to all new members, will be a part of all inquirer's classes, and other appropriate programs of Christian Formation, will be brought before the entire congregation at each annual meeting, and will be used by the Vestry as a tool for evaluation.