A Statement for the Common Good
adopted by the Alliance of Baptists’ Board of Directors
Sept. 30, 2017

“The Spirit of Exalted YHWH is upon me, for YHWH has anointed me; God has sent me to bring good news to those who are poor, to heal broken hearts; to proclaim release to those held captive and liberation to those in prison; to announce a year of favor from YHWH... They will restore the ancient ruins, and rebuild sites long devastated; they will repair the ruined cities, neglected for generations.”

Isaiah 61:1-2, 4 The Inclusive Bible

“A nation is formed by the willingness of each of us to share in the responsibility for upholding the common good.” Barbara Jordan

The board of directors of the Alliance of Baptists recognizes the challenge of these times, not only to speak prophetically, but to act morally upon our faith commitments in seeking the common good for humanity. The common good is that which provides benefit across all strata of society in contrast to advantages being directed toward a privileged few. We recognize the common good in the pursuit of equal justice for all within our society, citizen or foreigner.

We recognize that the health and diversity of God’s creation is intimately connected to the well being of humanity. Wars, conflict, violence, extreme weather events and altered climates are forcing migration as those who are most economically vulnerable are the least able to cope with the degradation of their communities or degradation of God’s creation. To compound matters, all of this is happening as our social safety nets are being cut apart. Healthcare, immigrant rights and support for vulnerable populations are all under attack.

We resist the nationalistic and divisive rhetoric eroding trust and cooperation between people, while lifting up a message of beloved community leading to a more just and benevolent society and healthier planet in the coming years. To build a movement that can address the multiplicity of crises that are before us these days requires that faith groups no longer act alone. To this end, we join our multi-faith friends and offer a moral voice in the public square to reflect the spiritual truths we have all inherited and to reform the policies and practices of the present.

We join our multi-faith friends and support the Faithful Budget, which focuses on the common good, encourages Congress to enact legislation that enhances the wellbeing of all Americans, makes a good-faith increase in funding support for poor and vulnerable people, makes a good-faith increase in funding for peacebuilding both at home and abroad and makes a good-faith increase in the proper care and keeping of the earth. We support a Faithful Budget that will:

1. Ensure that healthcare is available to all and provides research funding that leads to new approaches to promote and restore health.
2. Ensure that refugees are protected and provided for, that the root causes of migration are addressed and that immigrants are welcomed into our communities.

3. Protect life-sustaining gifts of air and water, celebrate the goodness of all creation by protecting vibrant ecosystems and habitats, and invest in sustainable energy for the future.

4. Honor treaties and other settlements with Native Americans and provide funding that will assist Native communities to survive and thrive.

5. Provide international humanitarian and poverty-focused development with a priority on smallholder and women farmers, provide funding for migration and refugee assistance programs, and provide funding for international disaster assistance and global health programs.

6. Invest in the restoration of people and communities by investing in “after prison” programs that promote hope, and cease funding the privatization of prison construction and management.

7. Provide economic security and mobility by investing in public education, supporting worker protections, investing in affordable housing, supporting nutrition programs and supporting children and families living in poverty.

8. Provide true human security and build a Just Peace by reducing Pentagon spending and providing support for diplomacy and peace-building, providing support for healing programs for veterans, and providing support to communities living in war zones through trauma-healing programs, infrastructure repair and environmental repair.

9. Raise adequate revenues to meet societal needs by sharing responsibility among individuals and corporations and eliminating tax loopholes that benefit only the wealthy few.

We join our multi-faith friends and reaffirm our support of comprehensive, just and humane immigration reform. In that regard we support the Dream Act as an important interim step and we support extension of Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for all current recipients until comprehensive, just and humane immigration reform is enacted.

We join our multi-faith friends in condemning the entire spectrum of racial oppression, from the overt violence and vitriol of alt-right and white supremacists to a racist criminal justice system that results in the mass incarceration of people of color, to white privilege whether confessed or unaware, to the slights and dangers of implicit bias. Racism has been and is for now a systemic evil that cannot be escaped by any of us, and therefore must be resisted by all of us.

We join our multi-faith friends in affirming and supporting worker justice, especially in the areas of a living wage, equal pay for equal work between men and women, the elimination of wage theft, the right to form unions, and the safety and humane treatment of all workers, including farm workers.

We join our multi-faith friends in opposing all forms of torture, including solitary confinement in our prisons.
We join our multi-faith friends in affirming and supporting both religious liberty and religious diversity, and therefore oppose all efforts to weaken the First Amendment and its constitutional principle of separation of church and state, a principle that best guarantees our religious freedom and diversity.

We join our multi-faith friends, particularly our partners in the Korean Council of Churches, in supporting diplomacy in Korea and denounce any rhetoric that calls for the destruction of entire countries.

We join many multi-faith friends and reaffirm our commitments to seeking an end to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, which is embodied by segregated roads, innumerable movement obstacles and checkpoints, illegal settlements, and an oppressive wall that divides communities and families. We call on the international community to hold the Israeli government accountable for human rights violations against the Palestinian people, thereby bringing an end to the second-class existence Palestinians endure in the West Bank and Gaza. We also oppose any effort to silence the freedom of speech of those who discuss and/or decide to support or engage in boycotts, divestment, and/or sanctions aimed at the current government of Israel and those economic entities and enterprises that enable the continuing occupation of Palestine by the Israeli government.

We join many multi-faith friends and reaffirm our commitments to seeking, supporting, and defending the right of women to have control of their own bodies and to have equal access to the full range of reproductive health care, including the safe termination of a pregnancy.

We join our multi-faith friends and pledge our support to those impacted by recent disasters, including hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and the recent earthquakes in Mexico. In particular, we pledge our love, support and—most importantly—ongoing advocacy for those most vulnerable in these disasters—the poor and working poor whose lives are disrupted, homes are lost, and safety nets have vanished.

We join our multi-faith friends in the affirmation that human life is sacred and must be protected. We reject any legislation that would weaken existing regulations and make it easier for people to access gun silencers under the guise of public health. Gun violence is a public health crisis that warrants more regulation by legislative bodies, not less.

These are, in fact, challenging times, and the complex issues before us weigh heavily on our hearts, minds and souls. Yet in the midst of it all there is an opportunity to speak and act boldly, challenging those in authority and empire to make straight the path and right societal wrongs that harm God’s creation. The board of directors of the Alliance of Baptists recognizes this opportunity, and calls on all of those it touches to courageously seek the common good for all of humanity.

The time is now to support the Common Good and ensure equal justice for all. It is our prayer that this statement will be a catalyst for change, and we encourage its broad dissemination by those faithfully seeking to heal, liberate, restore, rebuild and proclaim. Let it be so!