

Light of Christ Church

Statement of Faith

The Source & Summary of Our Faith & Doctrine:

We believe that the sixty-six books that comprise the Old and New Testaments, beginning with Genesis and ending with the Book of Revelation, are the inspired Word of God. We refer to this collection of sixty-six books as the Bible or Scripture. Our understanding of God and His plan for salvation for all mankind is drawn from Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*). We believe that salvation is not through any works of ours but purely through faith in Jesus Christ (*sola fide*). We also believe that we can have saving faith purely because of God's gracious love for us (*sola gratia*). Jesus is the only way in which we may be restored in our relationship with God (*solus Christus*). As Jesus himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." See [John 14:6](#).

We recognize that many wise Christians have written many insightful works about faith, salvation, and theology. We recognize that many of those works can edify us in many profound ways. But we also trust only the Bible itself as completely infallible. And while we ultimately anchor each of our beliefs to Scripture alone, our beliefs can be briefly summarized in the words of the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

Our beliefs can also be briefly summarized by the words of the Apostles Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended

into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nature of God:

As suggested by the three articles of both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed, we believe that God is fundamentally triune in nature. This means that there is only one God, but He also consists of three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, who is God the Son, is both fully God and fully man. God is perfect. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is both perfectly loving and perfectly just. Our finite minds cannot fully grasp the depths of these fundamental truths about who God is. But our inability to fully understand these concepts in no way undermines the truth of these statements.

The Nature of Humanity:

Adam and Eve were created by God in the Garden of Eden free from sin. Sadly, Adam and Eve sinned and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Not only have humans sinned in the past, but we now suffer from a condition known as original sin passed down to all humans from Adam. God demands that we live a perfect life. But because of our sin nature, we are unable to stop sinning in this life. Thankfully, God has provided a path for our restoration through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. Only by His atoning sacrifice, and our acceptance of Him as Lord and Savior, can we be restored to a right relationship with God. See Romans 5:12-21. It is God's desire that all would repent and accept His offer of salvation. See II Peter 3:9.

Relations Between People:

When asked what the most important commandment was, Jesus answered:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
Matthew 22:27-40

We are called to love God first; only when we truly love God first can we understand the other moral duties to which God calls us. But once we understand our duty to love God, our next immediate duty is to love those around us, particularly those in need. Our love should never be discriminatory. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus cut straight through the racist assumptions of first century Judea. See Luke 10:25-37. The Apostle Paul continued Jesus' line of teaching, explaining that as human beings, we are to be united in Christ, not divided along the lines of human thinking:

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:11

Relations Between Men and Women:

Both males and females are created in the image of God. Being both created in God's image, men and women are both equally loved by God and equally valued in His kingdom. As the Apostle Paul writes

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Galatians 3:23-29

But we also recognize that God has designed different roles for men and women here on earth. Each man and each woman has the right to remain single or to marry. Both choices are precious in God's sight. But within the community of home and church, God has ordained different roles for men and women. For example, in the home of a married couple, husbands are called to be the head of their families. See Ephesians 5:22-33.

Marriage is a sacred institution created by God; God instructs that men should only marry women, and women should only marry men. Homosexuality defies God's plan for men and women. See Romans 1:16-32. While homosexuality is a sin, God offers forgiveness for homosexual behavior just as He does for other sins like pride, greed, deceit, theft, envy, lust, drunkenness, anger, or murder. But in all cases we must acknowledge our sin and ask for God's free gift of forgiveness in order to receive His forgiveness. See Romans 6:20-23 and I John 1:5-10.

Similarly, God created only two genders: male and female. Gender is not a choice. Nor is gender a social construct. Our gender as male or female is a gift from God and part of us being created in His image. See Genesis 1:26-28.

Special Protection and Provision for Children:

Jesus makes very clear that children are to be specially welcomed by the church and specially protected from the evils of this world. See Matthew 18:1-14. As a result, one of our chief priorities as a church is to help children mature spiritually, intellectually, and physically. We seek to help children build a solid foundation on Christ, that they might mature and become His ambassadors here on earth. The protection of children begins at the moment of conception, as God already knows each of us from the time we are in the womb. See Psalms 139:13-16.

Church Leadership:

God calls men and women into different roles within the church just as He calls men and women into different roles within the family. A church is to be led by a group of elders. See Titus 1:5-9. Only men may serve as pastors or elders. See I Timothy 2:11-3:7. Other roles in the church are open to both men and women. For example, both men and women may serve as deacons and prophets. See, for example, Romans 16:1 and Luke 2:36-38.

Baptism and Communion:

God instructs that all should be baptized in His name. See Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 2:37-41. Despite God's emphasis on the importance of baptism, we also recognize that baptism is not required of those who are unable to be baptized, such as the thief on the cross. See Luke 23:39-43. While baptism is a one time event in the life of a Christian, Jesus commands that Christians should take communion regularly in remembrance of Him. See Luke 22:19. Communion, however, should only be taken by believers who fully understand and agree with the act in which they are participating. See I Corinthians 11:17-34.

If you would like to learn more about the Christian faith and what it means to follow Jesus, please speak with one of our elders or join one of our classes.