

The Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church

The faith community of Liberty Corner joins Christians around the world and across the ages to declare the core of our faith. These beliefs guide us and unite us as a community.

What We Believe. . . .

. . . .About the Bible

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are God's uniquely revealed and written Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are the Church's first and final authority in all areas of faith and life including theological doctrine, mission, Church order, character, and ethical behavior.

The Bible speaks to us with the authority of God himself. We seek to understand, love, follow, obey, surrender, and submit to God's Word—both Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and the scriptures, the written Word of God, which bear true and faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

Scripture

Matthew 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

. . . .About God

We worship the one and only living and true God who is revealed in the Bible and who is the source of all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness.

Trinity. With the Holy Christian Church in all ages, we confess the mystery of the holy Trinity—that there is one God alone, infinite and eternal, Creator of all things, the greatest good, who is one in essence or nature, yet who exists in a plurality of three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Creation/Providence/Sovereignty. God in the beginning created the universe and everything in it for the manifestation of God's glory, eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. He is the sovereign ruler of creation, working all things according to the counsel of his omnipotent and righteous will. In gracious providence God continually upholds, directs, oversees, and governs creation—all creatures, actions, and things.

In sovereignty God has seen fit to accommodate free will among moral creatures, resulting in great cultural and cosmic good and terrible evil, disorder, and disobedience. Nevertheless, God is in no way the author of evil or sin, but continues to govern creation in such a way as to cause all things to work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. God opposes all evil and will certainly triumph over it and bring creation to a glorious consummation.

Grace. God is a God of love. In grace God chooses to show love and mercy. When we were dead in trespasses and sin, God made us alive with Christ, saving us by grace through faith, as a sheer gift of sovereign love.

Worship. God—and God alone—is worthy of worship. We respond to God by consciously and intentionally seeking to declare, explore, celebrate, and submit to God’s righteous and gracious kingship over all of creation and over every aspect of our individual and corporate life, and thereby “to glorify him and enjoy him forever.” (Westminster, 7.01) This is true worship.

Scripture

Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 47:2; Isaiah 45:5
Matthew 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 14:26; Romans 1:23; 8:28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:7-11; Jude 1:25; Revelation 4:11

...About Humanity – Original Righteousness and Fall into Sin

Human beings were created by God in God’s own image—in true righteousness and holiness—to know, love, and obey God and be righteous stewards of the creation. Our earliest forebears, instead of acknowledging, worshiping, and obeying God, became disobedient sinners and brought sin and death upon themselves and all creation.

There is now a radical brokenness and corruption in human nature that is the result of and results in sin. Sin is rebellion against God. No human effort can fully resolve or redeem this defect. Sin is destructive, contagious, parasitical, polluting, and disabling. Human beings are sinners by nature, by influence, by choice, and by action.

While there is an inalienable glory and nobility to human beings because they are God’s image bearers, this image is now broken and distorted, and even our best and noblest actions are contaminated by sin. Every part of our human being—our personality, intellect, emotions, will, motives, virtues, and actions—is corrupted by sin. The human will, originally free and righteous, is now crippled and defective.

As a result, human beings are in bondage to sin and subject to God’s holy judgment. Without God’s intervening grace and salvation, they are lost and condemned.

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalms 51:5, 143:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19-20; Romans 3:10-23; 5:18-19; 7:18-23; 8:7; Ephesians 2:1-3

...About Jesus Christ – Incarnation of the Eternal Word

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God entered human history and became a real human being. He is the Word of God (John 1:1-3)—that is, the perfect and culminating expression of God’s mind and heart, of God’s will and character—present in the intimate fellowship of the Holy Trinity from eternity and fully engaged with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the work of creation and redemption.

Becoming human, Jesus was “all of God in a human body” (Colossians 1:19) and “God with us” (Matthew 1:23, and “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14-18). His divine-human identity is corroborated:

- by the witness of scripture
- in his divine conception and virgin birth,

- in God’s own testimony concerning Jesus,
- in Jesus’ supernatural works of healing and deliverance,
- in his obedience to the point of sacrificial death, and
- In his bodily resurrection from the dead, ascension, and exaltation.

He is now Lord over everything in creation.

The early Church in the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon accurately interpreted and expressed the apostolic testimony concerning Jesus—fully God and fully human. It is significant to us that in Christ we are dealing with God himself while at the same time in Christ we have a human being who truly represents us.

Jesus Christ is God’s only Mediator between God and humankind and God’s only agent for the salvation of the world. He is also the perfect expression of what humanity was designed to be. In his complete obedience, he became the representative Human Being, a second Adam, modeling for us human life and offering to God on our behalf human life that is rightly in God’s image—reflecting God’s glory in a wholly submitted life of steadfast love and righteousness.

This same Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, as attested in scripture, is to be the center of the Church’s proclamation, worship, discipleship, and mission. As we eagerly and prayerfully anticipate that “he will come again to judge the living and the dead” and to establish God’s righteous kingdom in fullness and perfection, we say, “Come Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20)

Scripture

Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31-35; John 1:1-3, 14-18; Romans 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 John 4:2-4

. . . .About Jesus Christ – His Atoning Work

Jesus’ death on the Cross was the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. In this act of obedience to God’s will and love for humankind, Jesus acted as the divine agent for the salvation of the world. In his death he perfectly fulfilled the office of High Priest and was also the perfect sacrifice for sins—“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (Jn 1:29) The Cross became an altar on which his life was sacrificed as a substitute for ours, and expiation for sins was completely accomplished. On the sole basis of the finished work of Christ on the Cross, sinners may now be reconciled to a holy God and set free from their bondage to sin and death to live for God in holiness and joy.

Jesus, in his resurrected body, ascended to his place of honor beside God the Father. Jesus Christ the eternal Son, Lord of heaven and earth, continues his saving work, advocating and interceding on behalf of the Church and functioning as:

- our eternal prophet (God’s living and revealed Word),
- priest (ever making intercession and mediation for us), and
- king (ruling his Church by Word and Spirit and with sovereign love and power).

Scripture

Matthew 1:21; Romans 3:25; 1 Corinthians 1:23-25; 2:2; 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Galatians 3:13; 6:14; Ephesians 1:19-23; Hebrews 9:11-12; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2

. . . .About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, has been with the Father and the Son from eternity, is of the same substance as the Father and the Son, of equal power and glory, and with the Father and the Son is to be believed in, loved, obeyed, and worshiped. Present everywhere, the Holy Spirit:

- empowered the Prophets to speak the Word of God,
- inspired the writers of the Holy Scriptures to record the mind and will of God,
- urges the message of the Gospel on the reason and conscience of men,
- convicts humanity of its sin,
- moves humanity to repentance,
- enables humanity to embrace Jesus Christ by faith, and
- dwells in humanity as Comforter and Sanctifier

Scripture Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-4 and Westminster Confession 6.050-6.054

. . . .About Salvation by Grace through Faith

Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ to reclaim humankind and all creation from human sin and its consequences. Salvation is a gift of God's grace received by faith. Christ's righteousness and atonement are the sole basis for human salvation. Faith in Christ is the only instrument by which this righteousness is received by individual believers, resulting in their justification.

Justification is the righteousness of Christ imputed to a sinful person *through faith alone* in Christ. Their faith appropriates Christ's atonement, resulting in their sins being atoned for and forgiven, and God reckoning them to be righteous.

Scripture also describes salvation as:

- ransom or redemption from slavery (Mark 10:45),
- sacrificial substitution (Christ's death for our death),
- reconciliation of sinners with a holy God,
- our sins being sacrificially expiated, satisfied, covered over, forgiven, and removed.

All of these ways describe how God has given us "the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation out of sheer grace solely for the sake of Christ's saving work." (Heidelberg, 4.021)

Faith, created in us by the Holy Spirit, is accepting the message of salvation as true and trusting God to grant this salvation to us – embracing the promises, as revealed in the scriptures, of God for this life and the life to come. In faith we accept, receive, and rest "upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace." (Westminster, 6.080)

Scripture

Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:22-26; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9

. . . .About The Sacraments Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The Church receives from the Lord Jesus Christ two sacred and symbolic actions, called sacraments, which enact and perform (symbolize and seal) the promises of the gospel. These sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ and of the washing away of sin through his sacrifice. Baptism of adults and infants publicly acknowledges that the one baptized is part of the covenant community of faith. Baptizing infants reminds us that God reaches out to us even before we are able to respond in faith. By nurturing children in faith and knowledge of God, their parents and the Church encourage them to respond in faith of their own as they mature into adults.

The Lord's Supper, using bread and the cup, is the sign and seal of our ongoing communion with the living Christ and of his life continuing to nourish us. Celebrating the Lord's Supper, we give thanks as we remember that Christ lived for us, Christ died for us and Christ will come again. All who confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are welcome to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Both sacraments point to and remind us of the holy sacrifice of Christ for us. The Holy Spirit uses these sacraments—the common signs of water and of bread and wine, combined with the promises in the gospel of eternal life and forgiveness through Christ—to convey grace, salvation, and the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are received in faith by the believing community in their worship together.

Scripture

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2: 38-39,42; 16:31-33; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-26; 12:13

. . . .About The Church

God's redeeming and reconciling work in the world was accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and continues through the Church, the body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The great ends of the Church are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind,
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God,
- the maintenance of divine worship,
- the preservation of the truth
- the promotion of social righteousness, and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world.

Jesus Christ, as the Lord of the Church, calls the Church into being, declares its mission, and, through the Holy Spirit, supernaturally equips it for its work. Its mission is:

- To be the provisional demonstration of the new reality God intends for humanity;
- To proclaim the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples;
- To make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to do all that Jesus commanded;
- To demonstrate new life in Christ tangibly through its love for one another and the quality of its common life together, sharing in worship, fellowship, and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
- To participate in God's activity in the world through its life for others.
- The Church is to commit itself fully to this mission, waiting for and hastening the Lord's coming again.

Scripture

Matthew 9:36-38, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; 2 Peter 3:10-13

Acknowledgements

The Session of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church acknowledges with gratitude that, in preparing this statement of What We Believe . . . , it relied on the historic and reformed Confessions written by our predecessors in the Faith and found helpful and informative insights in: *Essential Tenets and Reformed Distinctives* published by the Presbytery of San Diego and *The Theology Project* published by the Fellowship of Presbyterians.