

The My Local Statement of Faith

Like all Christians around the world, we wholeheartedly affirm the “ecumenical creeds”, The Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed. These are essential Christian beliefs anchored in the ancient Church and passed on to us through the Apostles. We stand united with Christians across time and the globe in these beliefs.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin
Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver
of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic
church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Why Does Theology Matter?

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. When we think about and study our faith, we are developing our worldview based on God and His Word. All of us, from all walks of life, are called to participate in this work as part of the Christian community. To help us faithfully carry out this task, we follow four helpful tools we call our theological guidelines. They are Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Reason. Let's look at each of these.

1. Scripture

The Bible is our primary source for learning about and understanding God. We believe that the Holy Scripture contains "all things necessary to salvation", and feel spurred to answer John Wesley's call to "search the Scriptures," what we more commonly call studying the Bible. In our reading and searching of Scripture, we learn the story of God, creation and humanity. We meet Jesus through whose life, death and resurrection, we receive the forgiveness of our sins. We encounter the Holy Spirit guiding and working in us in our lives today.

2. Tradition

We understand that as Christians today, we are part of a long tradition of people who through the centuries have been in relationship with God. We take seriously the commentaries, creeds, hymns, worship, prayers, art, and actions of those who have gone before us in various times, places, and cultures. That long tradition informs us of who we are as the people of God and how God calls us to live in our time, place and culture. We do not read the Bible and perform our theological task in a vacuum, but as part of the Church through the ages and around the world.

3. Experience

We also understand that each of us has our own unique experience with God. We recognize that we bring our whole selves to our faith, including personal and group experiences that have shaped us. As we think about experience as a source of understanding, however, we aren't talking about individual, subjective experience, much less about such experiences or accounts of them as having any priority over scripture or tradition. Instead, we are talking about how our experiences function to confirm and bear witness to the ways God is working in our lives to save us from the power of sin and make us holy.

4. Reason

While we acknowledge that much of our faith is beyond reason, we believe that using our God-given gift of reason is a tool we are to bring to our faith. We do not discount our thinking as we read the Bible, share the Gospel, ask questions, and seek answers.

Four Tools Working Together – Scripture/Tradition/Experience/Reason

These four tools (Scripture/Tradition/Experience/Reason) work in conjunction, with Scripture always being of primary importance. As we seek to grow in our faith the resources of tradition, experience, and reason are integral to our study of Scripture without displacing Scripture's primacy for faith and practice. These four sources—each making distinctive contributions, yet all finally working together—guide our quest for a vital and appropriate Christian witness.

Unity in the Essentials, Liberty in the Non-Essentials, Honor in Everything

The Non-Essentials

You will see the essentials list leaves some big ideas open to conversation and “liberty”. As we seek God together we trust that through the working of the Holy Spirit and our shared commitment to unity in practice, we can encourage each other in truth and faithfulness as we grow as disciples who make disciples. We believe that because of Jesus, our church can learn to model having meaningful conversations in love. That is the church we aim to be.

The Essentials of The Faith

My Local is a church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). In unity with the historic Christian church, we believe and confess the Apostles’, Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds as accurate representations of Scripture’s teaching.

The basic doctrines within My Local Statement of Faith represent what we believe to be core elements of biblical teaching. All Leaders at My Local affirm these doctrines. We call every local (member) to share our conviction in these essentials.

Doctrine of God

We believe there is one living and true God, existing in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in one God eternally existing as one essence and three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each person is fully, equally and eternally God, yet there is one God. Each person has precisely the same nature and attributes and is worthy of precisely the same worship, honor and praise. The entire Christian faith is bound together with the confession of God’s Trinitarian nature (Matt. 28:18-20).

We believe in God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. We believe in the Son, God from God, eternally begotten but not made, who in history assumed to Himself a human nature for the sake of our salvation (John 1:14; Heb. 1:3). He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power (Col.1:15-20). He suffered, died, was buried, resurrected, ascended and sits at the right hand of the Father until He returns for the final judgment and consummation of the Kingdom. We believe in the Holy Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son and is sent by the Father and Son to give new life (John 15:26-27). The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth and dwells within the regenerate (Eph. 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God’s Word. He is to be respected, honored and worshiped as God, the third person of the Trinity.

The triune God, Father, Son and Spirit, is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. As the immortal and eternal Creator, He sovereignly rules over all of His creation (Ps. 24:1).

Doctrine of Revelation

God has made Himself known to the world in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures and creation.

We believe that God has made Himself known to His creation. He has revealed Himself to us in His Son, the incarnate Word (Heb.1:1-2), in Scripture, the inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16), and in creation (Ps. 8; Rom. 1:20)

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the perfect revelation of who God is. Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), “the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb. 1:3) and a perfect reflection of God the Father (John 5:19).

We believe the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God and are therefore without error in their original writings. The Scripture is sufficient for all that God requires for us to believe and do and is therefore to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises (Is. 40:6-8). As God’s people hear, believe and obey the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel (Rom. 10:14-17).

Doctrine of Creation and Providence

We believe that God created the world from nothing and governs all things at all times in all places.

God created the whole world from nothing (Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 24:1). God’s creative work is the overflow of the love present within the Trinitarian fellowship. Creation, according to the design of God, was good (Gen. 1:3-31).

God doesn’t let the world exist, He makes the world exist. He upholds the universe by the word of His power, and He holds the world together in himself (Col. 1:17).

Doctrine of Humanity

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God to live in relationship with Him and fulfill His purposes on earth and therefore, possesses intrinsic dignity and worth.

God made humanity—male and female—in His own image (Gen. 1:27-30). Set apart as His image bearers, every human being is sacred. All men and all women, bearing the image of God, are meant to represent God in His creation (1 Cor. 10:31). God declares the created order to be very good, distinguishing men and women as His agents to care for, manage and govern over it. They enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church and civic life.

Doctrine of Sin

We believe that sin has fractured our relationship with God, leaving us in desperate need of salvation.

Through the temptation of Satan, humanity transgressed the command of God and fell from their original holiness and righteousness (Gen. 3). Now the entire human race inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law (Rom. 3:9-20). Therefore, all humans are under condemnation. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to the mind, will, body and affections. Unregenerate

humanity lives under the dominion of sin and Satan (Eph. 2:1-3). He is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God.

Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

We believe that, due to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again (John 3:5-8); that salvation is only by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ; and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are declared righteous by God and become children of God (Heb.10:19-25).

We believe the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that act of God by which the Holy Spirit imparts a new nature and a new spiritual life, not before possessed, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2:20). The mind is given a holy disposition and a new desire to serve God, the dominion of sin is broken, and the heart is transformed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God.

Doctrine of Sanctification

We believe that all who believe in Him are declared righteous by the Father on the grounds of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection and by the power of the Holy Spirit, have been consecrated and made holy through our union with Him.

This consecrated status forms the foundation from which we grow in holiness and godliness in our lives and relationships; we aim to become what we are (1 Peter 1:16). In Him we are consecrated to God, "Saints" (1 Cor. 1:2) made for His glory and we are "holy" (1 Cor. 6:11) by virtue of God's calling and our faith union with Him. All New Testament exhortations to personal godliness rest on a "definitive" work God has done for us and in us, in Christ.

Union with Christ carries with it not only judicial implications (justification) but moral and ethical implications (transformation). There is in Christ a definitive break with the sin-slavery of the past (Romans 6). Being "led of the Spirit" we are now free to live unto God and able to defeat sin.

Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ by which He fills the earth with His glory.

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful humanity into the fellowship of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:12-31). By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Church is an extension of the ministry of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). The Church is called to make disciples through worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances, fellowship, the exercise of our gifts and talents, and the proclamation of the gospel both in our community and throughout the world.

We believe there are two ordinances of the Church. One is that of believer's baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the other is the Lord's Supper.

Water baptism is only intended for those who have received the saving benefits of Christ through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. In obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself and the world, believers are baptized by water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts the release from the mastery of Satan, sin and death.

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

Doctrine of Resurrection and Consummation of the Kingdom of God

We believe that Jesus Christ is returning to the world in the future to establish His Kingdom that will never end.

The consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the glorification of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, is finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment (Rev. 20:7-15), but the righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new (Rev. 21:1-5).