

We are a Christian Church

We are a group of people that is fully committed to the teachings of Jesus, especially as taught by his original apostles (Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:20). We are “called out ones” that serve as the “body of Christ.” We are “in this world, but not of it.” We are called to be salt and light, yet our citizenship is in heaven.

Although likely developed after the time of the apostles, we believe the “Apostle’s Creed” fairly encapsulates the basic teachings of Christianity.

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.
On 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 thence 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.

We are a Protestant Church

Many changes emerged out of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, including a recovery of what we believe are these biblically based principles:

The priesthood of all believers

Separation of church and state

Freedom of conscience in religious beliefs

Personal Bible reading, study, and interpretation guided by the Holy Spirit

Congregational singing, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving

The righteousness of Christ appropriated to us through faith in him, making unnecessary the “conveying of grace” through priest-oriented sacraments

Recognition of only 2 valid ordinances:

- Believers’ baptism to symbolize one’s conversion through faith
 - Communion, as a symbolic act, memorializing Christ’s death and resurrection
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An emphasis on catechesis/discipleship, so that we apply God’s Word, not merely hear it. This leads to constant gratefulness and humility, ongoing spiritual growth, serving of fellow believers by using one’s spiritual gifts, and a strong work ethic.

Rightly administered church offices and church discipline

We also hold to the key theological truths stemming from the Reformation, often formulated as the “Five Solas”:

<i>Sola Scriptura:</i> “Scripture alone”	The written Scriptures are our sole source of authority for life and faith. No human being or church can add to his Word.	2 Timothy 3:15; Deuteronomy 4:2
<i>Sola Fide:</i> “faith alone”	We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We were dead but made alive. We are declared righteous, not made righteous.	Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5; Titus 3:5; Philippians 3:9
<i>Sola Gratia:</i> “grace alone”	Salvation is a “free gift;” it is not something we earn. We can be certain of our salvation.	Romans 6:23, 11:6
<i>Solo Christo:</i> “Christ alone”	Jesus is our great high priest, the sole mediator between God and man. We are justified by his righteousness alone, not ours or anyone else’s	1 Timothy 2:5; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 10:10-12
<i>Soli Deo Gloria:</i> “to the glory of God alone”	We live before God alone and solely for his glory.	1 Corinthians 10:31; Isaiah 42:8; Romans 14:4

For more on this, we would agree with the statement on “Mere Protestantism” available at www.reformingcatholicconfession.com.

We are a Fundamental Church

While some early fundamentalists tended to be harsh and judgmental, which we strongly disavow, we do agree with the original points that they made.

The inspiration, inerrancy, and literal interpretation of the Bible (For more on this, we agree with the <i>Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy</i> , written in 1978, and readily available on the internet.)	2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:25; John 16:13
The historical reality of Christ’s miracles and the Creation account in Genesis	John 2:23; John 3:2; John 11:46-47; Acts 2:22; Mark 10:6
The virgin birth of Christ	Isaiah 7:14-16; Luke 1:27-32
The belief that Christ died on the cross to pay for the sins of the world and rose from the dead	Luke 18:31; Luke 24:7; Acts 10:38-40; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
The physical return of Christ.	John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Rev 22:20

We are an Evangelical Church

We consider ourselves to be evangelicals. Some analysts have categorized our top identifying characteristics as follows:

We point to a specific, personal conversion experience in which we are “born again” or “saved.” Individuals (above an age of accountability) must personally trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

We believe in the Bible as God’s inspired Word to humankind, perfect in truth in the original text. It is the final authority in all matters of doctrine and faith — above all human authority.

We believe the work of Jesus on the cross, through his death and resurrection, is the only source of salvation and forgiveness of sins. We make it clear that salvation is through faith alone. We can do nothing to earn our way to heaven. Instead, we do good works in grateful response to our pardon, not to cause it.

We are strongly motivated to share the gospel either one-on-one or through organized missions. Emphasis is placed on the Great Commission’s call to share with the world the Christian message of salvation, and to be publicly baptized as a confession of faith, typically by immersion.

Most of us, though not all, believe there will be a rapture in the end times where the church will be caught up with Christ before the Great Tribulation, leaving nonbelievers behind to suffer on Earth.

We are a “Bible Church”

In the tradition of the “Bible Church” movement, we hold to:

Being self-ruled as an autonomous church, i.e. not a part of any larger organizational body

Being governed by a board of elders, elected by the congregation, rather than the congregation ruling itself, or a single pastor/bishop governing the body

Biblically based preaching

A systematic theology of Dispensationalism. In short, this would include these ideas:

- Throughout history, God has operated in different ways toward mankind.
- How he operated toward Israel is different than how he operates now toward the church.
- Promises given to Israel will be fulfilled in the future, e.g. possession of the Promised Land.
- There will be a glorious Millennium on the Earth, an actual 1000-year reign of Christ.
- There will be a Tribulation on the Earth, a seven-year outpouring of God’s wrath.
- The Tribulation will precede the Millennium (a belief called *pre-millennialism*, or *pre-mil*).
- The next prophetic event is the “Rapture.” It is imminent, i.e. it could happen at any time.
- The Rapture will precede the Tribulation (a belief called *pre-trib*).

We are a Contemporary Church

We are a church that will always seek ways to present the gospel and do ministry more effectively in the communities of which we are a part. We hold our traditions lightly, and we courageously address the pressing matters of the day. Regarding some of the controversial beliefs on which some evangelicals have different views than us, we hold these positions:

A cessationist view of the miraculous/apostolic spiritual gifts. In short, while we recognize our constant dependence on the Holy Spirit, we are not a charismatic church.

The roles of Pastor and Elders reserved for men. While not discounting the valuable gifts and contributions women make to the church, we interpret the Scripture to restrict the leading roles in the church to men alone.

Sexual intimacy reserved for life-long marriage between one man and one woman. We read Scripture to teach that sexual intimacy is to be enjoyed solely in the context of a monogamous marriage. And partners are to remain faithful—God hates divorce, which is not to be sought as a solution to marital difficulties. We believe that children are a wonderful blessing from God, yet we see no Biblical injunction against family planning.

We are sympathetic to those who experience same-sex attraction, but we believe homosexual behavior is strongly condemned in the Bible, and like any other sin, ought to be confessed and resisted. We love and accept those who are striving to resist temptation in this area in the same way we will love and accept everyone else in our church, because we are all striving to resist our own sinful tendencies.

Traditional binary genders of male and female. Scripture teaches that God made us male and female (Genesis 1:27, 5:2; Matthew 19:4). While we sympathize with those who struggle with their gender, we believe that it is not something that is “assigned” at birth, but is innate (chromosomally XX or XY)—it is a part of every cell of the body and inherently unchangeable. It is our duty as Christians to love everyone, and to seek justice, and we will do that wholeheartedly, but it is also our duty to proclaim the Word of God as is it written. (For more on this, we agree with the *Nashville Statement*, available at cbmw.org/nashville-statement/.)

Complementarianism in the roles of marriage. We believe that Scripture teaches that husbands and wives have complementary roles in marriage—equally important but different. The man is called to be the leader of the home but has the awesome charge to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave his life for her. He is not to be domineering or abusive. The wife is to be submissive and supportive, a critically important role. While the husband makes the final decision, he is also the one who is ultimately responsible.

We are a Grateful Church

Over the decades, we have seen God's hand of blessing in many ways. We are grateful for that, and we earnestly pray for his continued blessing. May this be spoken of CHURCH:

2 Corinthians 9:13-15 (NLT) *"As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!"* Amen.