

Church of the Good Shepherd
Confession of Faith
(adopted 2.9.14)

What We Believe - Doctrinal Statement

We are a church that introduces and demonstrates the reality of God's Kingdom here and now by sharing the peace and grace of Jesus with the people of Fairfield County and beyond. We seek to inspire people to live as passionate Christ-followers, prepared to work within their gifts and skills wherever their call takes them.

We are people of the Bible. We have confidence in the Scriptures, God's self-revelation in the words of people throughout history. The Scriptures tell a story that ignites and sustains us, the story of God's relentless Kingdom.

We find strength and agreement in the Creeds of the Church. We affirm what Christians have declared together throughout many years in both the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds.

Church of the Good Shepherd is a Holistic Missional Christian Community called to serve Jesus, our Rescuing King and make His Name and His here-and-coming Kingdom glorious.

- Holistic - We believe that the Gospel impacts every area of a person's life and culture. We reject unfounded categories that divide the world into uniquely sacred or purely secular. God is redeeming all of creation through Jesus.
- Missional - We believe the Church exists for the world and not for itself; the Church is to introduce and usher in the Kingdom of God into every part of this world.
- Christian - We embrace the teachings and divinity of Jesus Christ as well as His unique role as the means of salvation from sin for all who believe. We embrace Scripture as God's primary instrument by which He introduces this message to the world.
- Community - We believe that salvation brings people together as a reflection of a triune God: Father, Son and Spirit. Saved from sin by grace through faith, the people of God are able to live in unity as was intended by God in the beginning.

The unique beauty of Christianity centers on the reality that the Creator God journeyed from the heavens to join us in our humanity as the ultimate means of our salvation. We seek to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus by following His example to love one another as He loved us.

We offer this expanded statement of our convictions with humility and without any illusions about our ability to capture the fullness of God's truth in any document. We embrace and celebrate the mystery of faith, even as we look forward to the day when our Savior returns. Then we will know fully as we are fully known.

- **We Believe in the Triune God.** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - We Believe in God the Father - Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the seen and the unseen, and pronounced it all good; Who graciously calls out a people for His own possession to fight the powers and bless all the peoples on earth; Who keeps His promises to Abraham, David, and His covenant people; Who spoke through the prophets; Who speaks through His word; Who revealed Himself definitively in and through Jesus.
 - We Believe in Jesus Christ Our Lord - Alpha and Omega, the risen, reigning, and returning King, the object of our faith; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, the eternal Word made flesh; Who was crucified, died, and was buried; Who was resurrected on the third day; Who now sits in glory at the right hand of God the Father; Who will return to judge the world and consummate the fullness of His Kingdom; Who meets us in the bread and wine as we celebrate the victory of the cross, anticipating His triumphant return.
 - We Believe in the Holy Spirit - The giver of life, liberator, and enabler; Who was poured out at Pentecost; Who unites us in one body; Who gives us wisdom and discernment; Who gives us gifts for service; Who gives us the power to be loving and faithful; Who fills us for worship; Who guarantees our glorious destiny.

- **We Believe in the Church**
 - We are a "called out people." We are called out from captivity to freedom, death to life, and complacency to cruciformity. We are baptized into the community of the Rescuing King and fit into the body of Christ. We are the aftertaste of God's loving triumph on the cross and the fore-taste of His loving triumph at the consummation of His Kingdom. We are a missional community, serving our King, one another, and the world according to the gifts that the Spirit has graciously distributed among us.

- **We Believe in the Holy Scriptures**
 - God's revelation of Himself, which are given to men and women through the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles.

- **We Believe in the Administration of the Sacraments**
 - We observe two biblical sacraments rooted in the actions and teachings of Jesus Christ: Baptism and Communion. These sacraments represent both the individual, inward commitment to a personal relationship with Jesus and the corporate, outward sign of being connected to a local community of Christ followers - the local church.

- *Baptism* - Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ that follows an individual's acceptance of salvation by God's grace alone. Through Baptism, we publicly identify with the new family we enter into as followers of Christ.
 - *Communion* - The Communion meal is based on Jesus' last supper, the Passover meal he shared with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. Communion is a "believers' meal", intended for followers of Jesus who wish to remember His work on the cross.
- **We Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins**
 - All sins are forgiven through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. We were alienated, dead, enslaved, proud, deceived, and hopeless. God rescued us in and through Jesus who died for our sins and who actually became sin on a Roman cross. We do not understand this cosmic transaction, but we know that our sins have been forgiven, our lives have been altered, the curtain has been torn, the walls have been demolished, and the shackles have been removed. Jesus died for us to set us free to live for Him.
- **We Believe in the Resurrection of the Body**
 - We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate. The unique beauty of Christianity centers on the reality that the Creator God journeyed from the heavens to join us in our humanity as the ultimate means of our salvation. We seek to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus by following His example to love one another as He loved us, even to the point of death.
- **We Believe in Life Everlasting**
 - Jesus came to give us life - abundant, authentic and eternal. It is the life of the Kingdom, the life of the age to come, but we taste it here and now through the Holy Spirit as we eagerly look forward to the fullness of the Kingdom. Because we have this life, our citizenship is in Heaven, our ultimate loyalty is to our Liberating King, and we live as sojourners in a fallen and rebellious world.
 - Because we have this life, as Spirit-empowered nonconformists we seek to be a blessing in the world and to demonstrate the justice, love and shalom of Jesus by service to the poor and to the poor in spirit.