



What We Believe

God is Creator.

We believe that all creation has its origin in the wisdom, power and love of God. Each person is made in God's image. This means that something of God's character and creativity resides in each of us. God's purpose is for each of us to respond to God's love and to care for all that God made.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

The prophetic, historic, and resurrected presence of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is the basis of our faith, and it shapes everything we do. Jesus is Lord of the Universe and Head of the Church. Everything was created through him; everything belongs to him; and everything is sustained by him. Jesus is the ultimate source of God's truth and love, and the only way of salvation. As followers of Jesus, we do our best to let him rule over all aspects of our lives.

The Bible is God's Word.

The Bible is God's own living story. In a sense, it's a story full of stories, of who God is, how God works, and how God has always worked, to overcome the brokenness of the world. When we read the Bible, God's own Spirit guides our understanding and allows us to apply God's truth to every aspect of life.

We all fall short of who God intended us to be.

When we compare the reality of our lives with God's creative purpose for us, we easily grasp that we fall short of our potential. This is because of a condition known as sin. Nothing else explains why human beings are capable of so much good and so much evil at the same time. Sin is the condition of being self-directed rather than God-directed. Sin separates us from God, and there is no self-help remedy for the consequences of suffering and death it causes. However, God knows that we are unable to deal with our sin problem. Jesus lived the life we should have lived and died the death we deserved, so that sin would no longer separate us from God and each other. Because of Jesus' resurrection, sin and death no longer have the last word.

God loves us too much to leave us the way we are.

In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, the father (who represents God) is the one who covered the distance that separated both the irreligious younger son and the overly religious older son from himself. In the parable, Jesus critiques both popular culture (self-discovery) and organized religion (self-righteousness). Ironically, both brothers in the parable made the same mistake—living for themselves instead of God.

No matter who we are or what we've done, Jesus stands ready to be the agent of our transformation. By the power of God's Spirit, we increasingly become whom God intended.

We are made for worship.

God is perfect, all-powerful and lacks nothing. So why are we here? God doesn't need us for anything, but God knows that we need goodness and love in our lives. We are imprinted with the desire to offer praise and worship to God, who alone is only good and only acts for our good. We are created to reflect back to God what is God's exclusive worthiness to be praised. A lot of people don't know this, but when we fail to worship, it leaves a God-sized hole in our lives. Worship impels us to go out in the world to serve. In fact, all of life is meant to be an act of worship.

We are made to live for each other.

The Bible tells us that God created everything and it was "good." Yet even before sin entered creation, there was one thing that was "not good." It was not good for the man to be alone, and so God created woman. God designed man and woman for each other. In the same way, God gave us the church to be a community where all are welcome; where we pray and worship together; where we grow in faith and in love for God and each other; where we care for one another; where everyone's gifts are celebrated; where everyone's creativity is unleashed; and where everyone's spiritual growth is mutually upheld. We grieve when popular culture and even parts of the institutional church elevate human feelings above God's design.

We live out our faith in the world.

Just as God sent Jesus Christ to a suffering world, and just as Jesus sent out disciples to build his church, so God sends us. God can accomplish Jesus' entire mission without our help, but remarkably chooses to work through us to bring God's transforming power to bear in the world. The Good News of what Jesus has done is meant for all people. Following Jesus means that we tell other people his Good News and make disciples for him. Also, it means that we are to speak peace, advocate justice, and find ways to care for those who are hurting and marginalized.

Note: This short synopsis hardly begins to capture the richness of our theological heritage. We are part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and so we are in the "Reformed Tradition." Our roots trace back to the 16th century reformer John Calvin. In our third century, First Presbyterian continues to proclaim God's truth in love.