

What We Believe

It is no simple task to summarize what members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) believe. In his book *We Call Ourselves Disciples*, General Minister and President Emeritus Dr. Kenneth Teegarden explains: "Disciples always have opposed...the use of creeds to exclude persons from the church. It was (the) use of creeds as 'tests of fellowship' that the Disciples' founding fathers fingered as the major cause of division among Christians...(So) unlike most other churches, we Disciples do not have an official doctrinal statement we can refer to when someone asks, 'What does the Christian Church believe?'"

"For many years, *The Christian Evangelist*, a forerunner of later publications, carried a maxim in its masthead: 'In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.' It expresses the cherished conviction that liberty should be allowed in the nonessential areas into which most creedal statements roam."

A widely known slogan among Disciples claims "No Creed but Christ." That conviction is borne out in the manner in which persons come to be a part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

While Disciples honor no human-made creed, the preamble to a document called "The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" poetically and prayerfully expresses our shared affirmations in this way:

As members of the Christian Church, we confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world. In Christ's name and by his grace we accept our mission of witness and service to all people. We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth, and in the covenant of love, which binds us to God and to one another. Through baptism into Christ we enter into newness of life and are made one with the whole people of God. In the communion of the Holy Spirit we are joined together in discipleship and in obedience to Christ. At the table of the Lord we celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of Christ. Within the universal church we receive the gift of ministry and the light of scripture. In the bonds of Christian faith we yield ourselves to God that we may serve the One whose kingdom has no end. Blessing, glory and honor be to God forever. Amen