

PART II: BELIEVING IN CHRIST

THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

For Anglicans, as for all genuine Christians, authentic Christianity is apostolic Christianity. Apostolic Christianity rests on the historic, eyewitness testimony of Jesus' followers, the apostles, to the facts of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, present heavenly reign, and promised future return. Both Jesus and his apostles understood these facts to fulfill the Old Testament hopes of the Kingdom (or reign) of God, to which God's covenant with Israel was intended to lead, and which the Christian Church has received as a reality from Jesus and his apostles.

Anglicans affirm that the Bible, the Old and New Testament together, is "God's Word written" (Articles of Religion, 20), from which we learn these authoritative facts. By the second century, these key facts of apostolic faith had been organized into a syllabus of topics for catechetical teaching (the Rule of Faith), and this syllabus became the Apostles' Creed—so called because it sums up the apostolic faith. In due course this Creed, one of three found now in the Prayer Book, took its place as the baptismal declaration used in the church at Rome and elsewhere. The earliest of the Creeds we acknowledge, it is the briefest and most easily memorized for purposes of catechesis, but is complemented and enlarged upon by the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

To gather and focus the central truths of the apostolic faith, as the Scriptures present them, is the first task of all catechesis. That is what the Apostles' Creed does. It is arranged in three paragraphs or articles, which highlight in turn the person and work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus the Creed is Trinitarian, as is the New Testament itself. It is a curriculum of truths that leads inquirers into a focused and grounded personal faith in the Triune God, and into real discernment of the personal commitment such faith involves.

The Creed exists, as all Creeds and Confessions do, to define and defend this commitment that is basic to being a Christian. Its central article—which declares who and what Jesus Christ was, is and will be—is the fullest and longest; the article on God the Creator (the Father) introduces it, and the article on the Holy Spirit and the Christian salvation follows from it. As a whole, the Creed testifies to the vital core of God's self-revelation. It is a consensus document, coming to us with the resounding endorsement of faithful believers over nearly two thousand years, for it has been recited by Christian communities at all times and in all places throughout the history of the Christian Church. And it is a benchmark of orthodoxy, that is, of right belief, guiding our understanding of God's revealed truth at points where our sin-clouded minds might go astray.

ARTICLE I: FAITH IN GOD

“I BELIEVE”

Concerning the Creeds:

19. What is a creed?

A creed is a statement of faith. The word “creed” comes from the Latin *credo*, which means “I believe.” (John 20:24-29)

20. What is the purpose of the Creeds?

The purpose of the Creeds is to declare and safeguard God’s truth about himself, ourselves, and creation, as God has revealed it in Holy Scripture. (2 Peter 1:19-21, John 20:31)

21. What does belief in the Creeds signify?

Belief in the Creeds signifies acceptance of God’s revealed truth, and the intention to live by it. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

22. Which Creeds does the Church acknowledge?

The Church acknowledges the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. (Articles of Religion, 8)

23. Why do you acknowledge these Creeds?

I acknowledge these Creeds with the Church because they are grounded in Holy Scripture and are faithful expressions of its teaching. (1 Corinthians 15:3-11; Philippians 2:6-11)

24. Why should you know these Creeds?

I should know these Creeds because they state the essential beliefs of the Christian faith.

25. What is the Apostles’ Creed?

The Apostles’ Creed says:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He 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.

Concerning Holy Scripture:

26. What is Holy Scripture?

Holy Scripture is “God's Word written” (Articles of Religion, 20), given by the Holy Spirit through prophets and apostles as the revelation of God and his acts in human history, and is therefore the Church's final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16)

27. What books are contained in Holy Scripture?

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament form the whole of Holy Scripture, which is also called the Bible and the canon. (Articles of Religion, 6)

28. What is in the Old Testament?

The Old Testament contains the record of God’s creation of all things, mankind’s original disobedience, God's calling of Israel to be his people, God’s law, God’s wisdom, God’s saving deeds, and the teaching of God’s prophets. The Old Testament points to Christ, revealing God's intention to redeem and reconcile the world through Christ.

29. What is in the New Testament?

The New Testament contains the record of Jesus Christ's birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension, the Church's early ministry, the teaching of the Apostles, and the revelation of Christ’s coming eternal Kingdom.

30. How are the Old and New Testaments related to each other?

The Old Testament is to be read in the light of Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, and the New Testament is to be read in light of God's revelation to Israel. As Saint Augustine says, “the New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.” (Hebrews 8:1-7; Augustine, *Questions in the Heptateuch* 2.73)

31. What does it mean that Holy Scripture is inspired?

Holy Scripture is “God-breathed,” for the biblical authors wrote under the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit to record God's Word. (2 Timothy 3:16)

32. What does it mean that the Bible is the Word of God?

Because the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is rightly called the Word of God written. God is revealed in his mighty works and in the incarnation of our Lord, but his works and his will are made known to us through the inspired words of Scripture. God “has spoken through the prophets” (Nicene Creed), and continues to speak through the Bible today. (Hebrews 1:1-2; 3:7-11; 10:15-17; 12:25-27)

33. Why is Jesus Christ called the Word of God?

The fullness of God’s revelation is found in Jesus Christ, who not only fulfills the Scriptures, but is himself God's Word, the living expression of God’s mind. The Scriptures testify about him: “In the

beginning was the Word” and “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Therefore, “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” (John 1:1, 14; Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, prologue)

34. How should Holy Scripture be interpreted?

Just as Holy Scripture was not given through private interpretation of things, so it must also be translated, read, preached, taught, and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the Church's historic and consensual reading of it. (2 Peter 1:20-21; Jerusalem Declaration; Articles of Religion, 2)

35. How should belief in the God of the Bible affect your life?

As I prayerfully learn Holy Scripture, I should expect the Holy Spirit to use it to teach, rebuke, correct and train me in the righteousness that God desires. This nourishes my soul toward the service of God and my neighbor. (2 Timothy 3:16)

36. How should you use the Holy Scriptures in daily life?

I should “hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them” (Book of Common Prayer) so that, by patience and strengthening through God’s Word, I may embrace and cling to the hope of everlasting life given to me in Jesus Christ. I should read and pray Scripture daily, that I may know God’s truth and proclaim it clearly to the whole world.

37. What other books does the Church acknowledge?

The canon of Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. The fourteen books of the Apocrypha may also be read “for example of life and instruction of manners,” but “not to establish any doctrine” (Articles of Religion, 6).

“I BELIEVE IN GOD”

38. Who is God?

God is one divine Being eternally existing in three divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Trinity. (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19)

39. According to Holy Scripture, what is the nature and character of God?

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). Sharing an eternal communion of love between the three Persons, God loves and mercifully redeems fallen creation. “God is holy” (Psalm 99; Isaiah 6:1-4). God is utterly transcendent, good, righteous, and opposed to all sin and evil. God’s love is holy, God’s holiness is loving, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of God’s whole character. (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18; 17:21; Colossians 1:19)

“THE FATHER ALMIGHTY”

40. Who is God the Father?

God the Father is the first Person of the Holy Trinity, from whom the Son is eternally begotten and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds. (John 1:1, 14; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26, Nicene Creed)

41. Why do you call the first of the three divine Persons “Father?”

Our Lord Jesus called God “Father” and taught his disciples to do the same, and St. Paul teaches that God adopts believers as his children and heirs in Christ, sending his Holy Spirit into our hearts crying “Abba, Father.” (Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7).

42. What do you mean when you call God “Father?”

When I call God “Father,” I acknowledge that I was created by God for relationship with him, that God made me in his image, that I trust in God as my Protector and Provider, and that I put my hope in God as his child and heir in Christ. (Genesis 1:26, Matthew 6:25-33; Romans 8:16-17)

43. Why do you say that God the Father is “Almighty?”

I call the Father “Almighty” because he has power over everything and accomplishes everything he wills. Together with his Son and Holy Spirit, the Father is all-knowing and ever present in every place. (I Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 139)

“CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”

44. Why do you call God the Father “Creator?”

I call God the Father “Creator” because he is the sole designer and originator of everything that exists. He creates and sustains all things through his Word, and gives life to all creatures through his Spirit. (Genesis 1; 2:7; Job 33:4; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:3)

45. How does recognizing God as Creator affect your understanding of his creation?

I acknowledge that God made for his own glory everything that exists. He created human beings in his image, male and female, to serve him as creation’s stewards, managers and caretakers. He entrusts his good creation to us as a gift to enjoy and a responsibility to fulfill. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:15; Revelation 4:11)

46. What does it mean that God made both heaven and earth?

It means that all things, whether visible or invisible, physical or spiritual, were brought into being out of nothing by the Word of the eternal God. (Genesis 1:1)

47. If God made the world good, why do I sin?

Adam and Eve rebelled against God, thus bringing into the world pain, fruitless toil, alienation from God and each other, and death. I have inherited a fallen and corrupted human nature, and I too sin and fall short of God’s glory. (Genesis 3, Romans 3:23; 5:12)

48. How does sin affect you?

The God-opposing, self-centered power of sin, which is present in all people, corrupts me and my relationship with God, with others and with creation. Because of sin and apart from Christ, I am spiritually dead, separated from God, under his righteous condemnation, and without hope. (Genesis 3; Ephesians 2:1-3; Galatians 5:19-21)

ARTICLE II: FAITH IN CHRIST

“I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON”

49. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word and Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He took on human flesh to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world, the only Mediator between God and fallen mankind. (1 Timothy 2:5; John 1:14; 14:6; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

50. What does “Jesus” mean?

“Jesus” means “God saves” and is taken from the Hebrew name *Yeshua* or Joshua. In Jesus, God has come to save us from the power of sin and death. (Matthew 1:21)

51. What does “Christ” mean?

Christos is a Greek word meaning “Anointed One.” Old Testament kings, priests and prophets were anointed with oil. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to perfectly fulfill these roles and he rules now as God’s prophet, priest, and king over his Church and all creation. (Acts 10:38)

52. Why is Jesus called the Father’s “only Son?”

Jesus alone is God the Son, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He alone is the image of the invisible Father, the one who makes the Father known. He is now and forever will be incarnate as a human, bearing his God-given human name. The Father created and now rules all things in heaven and earth “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-5; John 1:18)

“OUR LORD”

53. What do you mean when you call Jesus Christ “Lord?”

I acknowledge Jesus’ authority over the Church and all creation, over all societies and their rulers, and over every aspect of my personal, social, professional, recreational, and family life. I surrender my life to him and seek to live every part of my life in a way that pleases him. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:21-22; Luke 9:23-26)

“HE WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”

54. How was Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit?

Through the creative power of the Holy Spirit, the eternal Son assumed a fully human nature from his mother, the Virgin Mary, in personal union with his fully divine nature at the moment of conception in Mary’s womb. (Luke 1:34-35)

55. Was Mary the only human parent of Jesus?

Yes. Mary is held in honor, for she submitted to the will of God and bore the Son of God as her own son. However, after God told Joseph of Mary’s miraculous conception, Joseph took Mary as his wife and they raised Jesus as their son. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38, 2:48)

56. What is the relationship between Jesus’ humanity and his divinity?

Jesus is both fully and truly God, and fully and truly human. The divine and human natures of Jesus’ Person may be distinguished but can never be separated, changed or confused. All that Jesus does as a human being, he also does as God; and before he ever became human, he was eternally living and active within the unity of the Holy Trinity. (John 1:1-2; 5:18; 10:30; 14:8-9; Luke 2:7; Definition of Chalcedon)

“HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE”

57. Why did Jesus suffer?

Jesus suffered for our sins so that we could have peace with God, as prophesied in the Old Testament: “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

58. In what ways did Jesus suffer?

On earth, the incarnate Son shared physically, mentally and spiritually in the temptations and sufferings common to all people. In his agony and desolation on the cross, he suffered in my place for my sins and, in so doing, displayed the self-denial I am called to embrace for his sake. (Hebrews 4:14-5:10; Mark 8:34-38; Philippians 2:5)

59. Why does the Creed say that Jesus suffered under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate?

The Creed thus makes clear that Jesus’ life and death were real events that occurred at a particular time and place in Judea in the first century A.D. (Matthew 27:22-26)

“WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED. HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD”

60. What does Jesus’ crucifixion mean?

It means that Jesus was executed as a common criminal. He was scourged, mocked, and nailed to a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem. Though humanly a miscarriage of justice, his execution fulfilled

God's plan that Jesus would bear my sins and die the death that I deserve, so that I could be saved from sin and eternal condemnation and reconciled to God. (Matthew 20:28; 27:32-37; Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

61. Why does the Creed make a point of saying that Jesus died?

The Creed makes the point to emphasize that Jesus died a real, bodily death such as all people face because of our sins. (Matthew 27:45-51)

62. Why does the Creed emphasize Jesus' death in this way?

The Creed emphasizes Jesus' death to counter suspicions that Jesus did not truly die on the cross, to celebrate the fact that He died there to secure our salvation, and to prepare our minds to grasp the glory of his bodily resurrection.

63. What does the Creed mean by saying that Jesus descended to the dead?

That Jesus descended to the dead means that he truly died; his spirit did not remain with his body, but entered the realm of death. (1 Peter 3:19)

“ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN”

64. What does the Creed mean when it affirms that Jesus rose again from the dead?

It means that Jesus was not simply resuscitated; God restored him physically from death to life in his perfected and glorious body, never to die again. His tomb was empty; Jesus had risen bodily from the dead. The risen Jesus was seen by his apostles and hundreds of other witnesses.

(1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

65. What kind of earthly life did Jesus have after he rose from the dead?

Following his resurrection, Jesus spent forty days visiting and teaching his followers. He appeared to his disciples, spoke to them, invited them to touch him and see his scars, and ate with them. (John 20:19-23; Luke 24:13-49; Acts 1:3)

“HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN”

66. How should you understand Jesus' ascension into heaven?

Jesus was taken up out of human sight, and returned in his humanity to the glory he had shared with the Father before his incarnation. There he intercedes for his people and receives into heavenly life all who have faith in him. Though absent in body, Jesus is always with me by his Spirit and hears me when I pray. (John 17:5; Acts 1:1-11)

67. What is the result of the Ascension?

Jesus ascended into heaven so that, through him, his Father might send us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians are united as Christ's Body on earth to Jesus, our ascended and

living Head, and in him to one another. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 4:15-16; John 14:15-29, 15:5-9)

“AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER”

68. What does it mean for Jesus to sit at God the Father’s right hand?

The throne on the monarch’s right was traditionally the seat for the chief executive in the kingdom. Ruling with his Father in heaven, Jesus is Lord over the Church and all creation, with authority to equip his Church, advance his Kingdom, bring sinners into saving fellowship with God the Father, and finally to establish justice and peace upon the earth. (Isaiah 9:6-7; 32:16-18; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 5:9-10)

69. What does Jesus do for you as he sits at the Father’s right hand?

Noting my needs and receiving my prayers, Jesus intercedes for me as our great high priest. Through Jesus and in his name, I am now granted access to the Father when I make my confessions, praises, thanksgivings and requests to him. (Hebrews 7:23-25)

70. How does your knowledge of Jesus’ heavenly ministry affect your life today?

I can rely on Jesus always to be present with me as he promised, and I should always look to him for help as I seek to serve him. (Matthew 28:20)

“HE WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.”

71. What does the Creed mean when it says, “He will come again?”

Jesus promised that he would return (Luke 21:27-28). His coming in victory with great glory and power will be seen by all people and will bring this age to an end. The present world order will pass away and God will usher in a fully renewed creation to stand forever. All the saints will be together with God at that time. (2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-4)

72. When should you expect Jesus’ return?

Jesus taught that only the Father knows the actual day of his return. God patiently waits for many to repent and trust in him for new life; yet Jesus will return unexpectedly, and could return at any moment. (Matthew 24:36-44; 2 Peter 3:9)

73. What should be your attitude as you await Jesus’ return?

I should anticipate with joy the return of Jesus as the completion of my salvation. The promise of his return encourages me to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to live a holy life, and to share the hope of new life in Christ with others. (Titus 2:11-14)

74. How should you understand Jesus' future judgment?

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, the world as we know it will come to an end. All that is wrong will be made right. All people who have died will be resurrected and, together with those still living, will be judged by Jesus. Then each person will receive either eternal rejection and punishment, or eternal blessing and welcome into the fullness of life with God. (Matthew 25:31-46)

75. How should you live in light of Jesus' coming return for judgment?

Because I do not know when Jesus will come, I must be ready to stand before him each and every day of my life, I should eagerly seek to make him known to others, and I should encourage and support the whole Church, as best I can, to live in readiness for his return. (Matthew 25:1-13)

76. Should you be afraid of God's judgment?

The unrepentant should fear God's judgment, for "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," but for those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation. I have no reason to fear the coming judgment, for my Judge is my Savior Jesus Christ, who loves me, died for me, and intercedes for me. (Romans 1:18; 8:1, 31-34)

77. What does Scripture mean when it tells you to fear God?

It means that I should live mindful of his presence, walking in humility as his creature, resisting sin, obeying his commandments, and reverencing him for his holiness, majesty, and power. (Exodus 20:20; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 8:13; 9:10)

78. Should you pass judgment on sinners or non-Christians?

No. God alone judges those outside the Church. The Church may proclaim God's condemnation of sin and may exercise godly discipline over members who are unrepentant; but I am called only to judge between right and wrong, to judge myself in the light of God's holiness, and to repent of my sins. (Matthew 7:1-5, 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; 11:31)

79. How do you judge yourself?

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I judge myself by examining my conscience. I may use the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, or other equivalent Scriptures, as well as godly counsel, to help me see my sins. (Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 5:1-11)

80. How does the Church exercise its authority to judge?

A priest, acting under the authority of the bishop, may bar a person from receiving communion because of unrepented sin, or because of enmity with another member of the congregation, until there is clear proof of repentance and amendment of life. But the authority Christ gave to his Church is more often exercised by declaring God's forgiveness in absolution. (Matthew 16:19)

ARTICLE III: FAITH IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

“I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT”

81. Who is the Holy Spirit?

God the Holy Spirit is the third Person in the one Being of the Holy Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son, and equally worthy of our honor and worship. (Luke 11:13; John 14:26; 16:7)

82. What principal names does the New Testament give to the Holy Spirit?

Jesus names the Holy Spirit “Paraclete” (the one alongside). This signifies Comforter, Guide, Counselor, Advocate, and Helper. Other names for the Holy Spirit are Spirit of God, Spirit of the Father, Spirit of Christ, and Spirit of Truth. (John 14:15-17; Matthew 10:20; Romans 8:9)

83. What are the particular ministries of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit imparts life in all its forms throughout God’s creation, unites believers to Jesus Christ, indwells each believer, convicts believers of sin, applies the saving work of Jesus to the believer’s life, guides the Church into truth, fills and empowers believers through spiritual fruit and gifts given to the Church, and gives understanding of the Scripture which He inspired. (2 Peter 1:21; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15)

84. How does the Holy Spirit relate to you?

Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit to make Jesus known to me, to indwell and empower me in Christ, to bear witness that I am a child of God, to guide me into all truth, and to stir my heart continually to worship and to pray. (John 16:12-15; Romans 8:15, 26; Ephesians 1:17-19)

85. How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

The Scriptures teach that, through repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, I am forgiven my sins, indwelled from then on by the Holy Spirit, given new life in Christ by the Spirit, and freed from the power of sin so that I can be filled with the Holy Spirit. (John 3:1-7; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 5:18)

86. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the very character of Jesus developing in us through the work of the Holy Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

87. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit include faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, other languages, the interpretation of other languages, administration, service, encouragement,

giving, leadership, mercy and others. The Spirit gives these to individuals as he wills.

(Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 27-31; Ephesians 4:7-10)

88. Why does the Holy Spirit give these gifts?

The Holy Spirit equips and empowers each believer for service in the worship of Jesus Christ, for the building up of his Church, and for witness and mission to the world. (Ephesians 4:12-16)

“THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH”

89. What is the Church?

The Church is the whole community of faithful Christians in heaven and on earth. The Church on earth gathers in local congregations to worship in Word and Sacrament, to serve God according to the Scriptures, and to proclaim the Gospel, under the leadership of those whom God appoints for this purpose. (Articles of Religion, 19; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Peter 2:9)

90. How does the New Testament teach you to view the Church?

The New Testament teaches me to view the Church as God’s covenant people and family, as the body and bride of Christ, and as the temple where God in Christ dwells by his Spirit. (John 1:12; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16b-7:1; Revelation 19:6-10; 21:9-10)

91. Why is the Church called the Body of Christ?

The Church is called the Body of Christ because all who belong to the Church are united to Christ as their Head and source of life, and are united to one another in Christ for mutual love and service to him. (1 Corinthians 12: 12-27)

92. What are the “marks” or characteristics of the Church?

The Nicene Creed expands on the Apostles’ Creed to list four characteristics of the Church: it is “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” (see Articles of Religion, 8).

93. In what sense is the Church “one?”

The Church is one because all its members form the one Body of Christ, having “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” The Church is called to express this unity in all relationships between believers. (Ephesians 4:5-6)

94. Why is the Church called “holy?”

The Church is holy because the Holy Spirit dwells in it and sanctifies its members, setting them apart to God in Christ, and calling them to moral and spiritual holiness of life.

95. Why is the Church called “catholic?”

The term “catholic” means “according to the whole.” The Church is called “catholic” because it holds the whole faith once for all delivered to the saints, and maintains continuity with the apostolic Church throughout time and space.

96. Why is the Church called “apostolic”?

An apostle is one who is sent. The Church is called apostolic because we hold the faith of Christ’s first Apostles; because we are in continuity with them; and because we, like them, are sent by Christ to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples throughout the whole world. (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 9:1-6)

“THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”

97. Who are the saints?

The saints are all those in heaven and on earth who have faith in Christ, are set apart to God in Christ, are made holy by his grace, and live faithfully in him and for him. (Ephesians 1:1; Revelation 7:9-15)

98. What does the word “communion” mean?

The word “communion” means being “one with” someone else in union and unity. Christians use it to refer to the relationship of the three Persons within the one being of God, to our union with all three Persons through our union with Christ, and to our relationship with one another in Christ. (John 17:20-21)

99. What is the “communion of the saints?”

The communion of the saints is the unity and fellowship of all those united in one Body and one Spirit in Holy Baptism, both those on earth and those in heaven. (Ephesians 4:4-5, Hebrews 12:1).

100. How is the communion of the saints practiced?

It is practiced by mutual love, care and service, and by worshiping together where the word of the Gospel is preached and the sacraments of the Gospel are administered.

101. How are the Church on earth and the Church in Heaven joined?

All the worship of the Church on earth is a participating in the eternal worship of the Church in heaven. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

CONCERNING SACRAMENTS

102. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive that grace, and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. (1662 Catechism)

103. How should you receive the sacraments?

I should receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ is necessary to receive grace, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in my life. (1662 Catechism; Articles of Religion, 28)

104. What are the sacraments of the Gospel?

The two sacraments ordained by Christ, which are generally necessary for our salvation, are Baptism and Holy Communion, which is also known as the Lord's Supper or the Holy Eucharist. (Articles of Religion, 25)

105. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

The outward and visible sign is water, in which candidates are baptized "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" – the name of the Triune God to whom the candidate is being committed. (1662 Catechism, 1 Peter 3:21; Matthew 28:19)

106. What is the inward and spiritual grace set forth in Baptism?

The inward and spiritual grace set forth is a death to sin and a new birth to righteousness, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. I am born a sinner by nature, separated from God, but in baptism, rightly received, I am made God's child by grace through faith in Christ. (John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 2:12; Galatians 3:27-29)

107. What is required of you when you come to be baptized?

Repentance, in which I turn away from sin; and faith, in which I turn to Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord and embrace the promises that God makes to me in this sacrament. (Acts 2:38)

108. Why is it appropriate to baptize infants?

Because it is a sign of God's promise that they are embraced in the covenant community of Christ's Church. Those who in faith and repentance present infants to be baptized vow to raise them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, with the expectation that they will one day profess full Christian faith as their own. (Acts 2:39)

109. What signs of the Holy Spirit's work do you hope and pray to see as a result of your baptism?

I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit who indwells me will help me to be an active member of my Christian community, participate in worship, continually repent and return to God, proclaim the faith, love and serve my neighbor, and strive for justice and peace. (Hebrews 10:25; 12:14; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:1)

110. Why did Christ institute the sacrament of Holy Communion?

He instituted it for the continued remembrance of the sacrifice of his atoning death, and to convey the benefits the faithful receive through that sacrifice. (Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

111. What is the outward and visible sign in Holy Communion?

The visible sign is bread and wine, which Christ commands us to receive. (1 Corinthians 11:23)

112. What is the inward and spiritual thing signified?

The spiritual thing signified is the body and blood of Christ, which are truly taken and received in the Lord's Supper by faith. (1 Corinthians 10:16-18; 11:27; John 6:52-56)

113. What benefits do you receive through partaking of this sacrament?

As my body is nourished by the bread and wine, I receive the strengthening and refreshing of my soul by the body and blood of Christ; and I receive the strengthening and refreshing of the love and unity I share with fellow Christians, with whom I am united in the one Body of Christ. (1662 Catechism)

114. What is required of you when you come to receive Holy Communion?

I am to examine myself as to whether I truly repent of my sins and intend to lead the new life in Christ; whether I have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ and remember his atoning death with a thankful heart; and whether I have shown love and forgiveness to all people. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

115. What is expected of you when you have shared in Holy Communion?

Having been renewed in my union with Christ and his people through sharing in the Supper, I should continue to live in holiness, avoiding sin, showing love and forgiveness to all, and serving others in gratitude.

116. Are there other sacraments?

Other rites and institutions commonly called sacraments include confirmation, absolution, ordination, marriage, and anointing of the sick. These are sometimes called the sacraments of the Church.

117. How do these differ from the sacraments of the Gospel?

They are not commanded by Christ as necessary for salvation, but arise from the practice of the apostles and the early Church, or are states of life blessed by God from creation. God clearly uses them as means of grace.

118. What is confirmation?

After making a mature commitment to my baptismal covenant with God, I receive the laying on of the bishop's hands with prayer. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)

119. What grace does God give you in confirmation?

In confirmation, God strengthens the work of the Holy Spirit in me for his daily increase in my Christian life and ministry. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6)

120. What is absolution?

After repenting and confessing my sins to God in the presence of a priest, the priest declares God's forgiveness to me with authority given by God. (John 20:22-23; James 5:15-16)

121. What grace does God give to you in absolution?

In absolution, God conveys to me his pardon through the cross, thus declaring to me reconciliation and peace with him, and bestowing upon me the assurance of his grace and salvation.

122. What is ordination?

Through prayer and the laying on of the bishop's hands, ordination consecrates, authorizes, and empowers persons called to serve Christ and his Church in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. (1 Timothy 1:5; 5:22; Acts 6:6)

123. What grace does God give in ordination?

In ordination, God confirms the gifts and calling of the candidates, conveys the gift of the Holy Spirit for the office and work of bishop, priest or deacon, and sets them apart to act on behalf of the Church and in the name of Christ.

124. What are the three ordained ministries in the Anglican Church?

The three orders are bishops, priests, and deacons.

125. What is the work of bishops?

The work of bishops is to represent and serve Christ and the Church as chief pastors, to lead in preaching and teaching the faith and in shepherding the faithful, to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church, and to bless, confirm and ordain, thus following in the tradition of the Apostles. (Titus 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 20:28)

126. What is the work of priests?

The work of priests, serving Christ under their bishops, is to nurture congregations through the full ministry of the Word preached and Sacraments rightly administered, and to pronounce absolution and blessing in God's name. (Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1)

127. What is the work of deacons?

The work of deacons, serving Christ under their bishops, is to assist priests in public worship, instruct both young and old in the catechism, and care for those in need. (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

128. What is marriage?

Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, binding both to self-giving love and exclusive fidelity. In the rite of Christian marriage, the couple exchange vows to uphold this covenant. They do this before God and in the presence of witnesses, who pray that God will bless their life together. (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19; Mark 10:2-9; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39)

129. What is signified in marriage?

The covenantal union of man and woman in marriage signifies the communion between Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, and the Church, his holy bride. Not all are called to marriage, but all Christians are wedded to Christ and blessed by the grace God gives in marriage. (Ephesians 5:31-32)

130. What grace does God give in marriage?

In Christian marriage, God establishes and blesses the covenant between husband and wife, and joins them to live together in a communion of love, faithfulness and peace within the fellowship of Christ

and his Church. God enables all married people to grow in love, wisdom and godliness through a common life patterned on the sacrificial love of Christ.

131. What is the anointing of the sick?

Through prayer and anointing with oil, the minister invokes God's blessing upon those suffering in body, mind, or spirit. (Matthew 10:8; James 5:14-16).

132. What grace does God give in the anointing of the sick?

As God wills, the healing given through anointing may bring bodily recovery from illness, peace of mind or spirit, and strength to persevere in adversity, especially in preparation for death.

“THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

133. What are sins?

A sin is any desire or disobedient act that arises out of the fallen condition of my human nature and falls short, either by commission or omission, of perfect conformity to God's revealed will.

(1 John 3:4)

134. How does God respond to human sin?

All sin is opposed to the holiness of God, and is therefore subject to God's condemnation. But God in his mercy offers forgiveness and salvation from sin to all people through the reconciling life, death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:28; Romans 1:18-2:4; 6:6-11)

135. How does God forgive your sins?

By virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice, God sets aside my sins, accepts me, and adopts me as his child and heir in Jesus Christ. Loving me as his child, he forgives my sins whenever I turn to him in repentance and faith. (2 Corinthians 5:16-18)

136. How should you respond to God's forgiveness?

As I live in the grace of God's constant forgiveness, so I should live in constant thanks and praise to him; and as I have been loved and forgiven, so I should love and forgive without limit those who sin against me. (Matthew 6:12; 18:22)

137. What is grace?

Grace is the gift of the triune God's love, mercy, and help, which he freely gives to us who, because of our sin, deserve only condemnation. (Acts 20:32; Romans 3:24; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:6-7)

138. Does God give his grace only to Christians?

No. God graciously provides for all people; “he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). However, he shows his saving grace by bringing to faith in Christ those who are far from him. (Romans 5:1-11).

139. For what purpose does God give you grace?

God gives me grace in Christ for the forgiveness of my sins, the healing of sin's effects, growth in holiness, preservation through death and judgment, and my ultimate transformation into the image of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:2-10)

140. Is God's grace only for your religious or spiritual life?

No. God cares about my whole life, and his grace in Christ is at work in every aspect of it. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:28)

141. Can you earn God's grace?

No. God gives his grace freely, and enables me to receive it. Everything I do should be in response to God's love and grace made known in Christ, for "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), and "we love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY"

142. How should you think of the human body?

My body is the good and God-given means of my experience, expression, enjoyment, love and service within God's good creation. But sin and death now infect this world, and my body will degenerate and die. (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:19)

143. Where do you go after you die?

When I die, my body will perish but, by the will of God, my soul will live on, awaiting resurrection and final judgment. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

144. What is the resurrection of the body?

When Jesus appears on judgment day, he will bring all the dead back to bodily life, the wicked to judgment and the righteous to eternal life in the glory of God. (John 5:25-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)

145. What do you know about the resurrected bodies of believers?

I know that they will match, express and serve our redeemed humanity, and be fully renewed in the image of Christ, being fully glorified in him. (2 Peter 1:4)

146. How does the promise of bodily resurrection affect the way you live today?

Because my body was created good by God and is redeemed by him, I should honor it. I should refrain from any violence, disrespect or sin that would harm, demean or violate either my body or the bodies of others. (Romans 12)

"AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING."

147. What do you know about the unending life of believers, following judgment day?

I know that it will be a life of joyful fellowship with our triune God and with resurrected believers, as we praise and serve God together in the new heaven and the new earth. (Revelation 21:1-4)

148. How should you live in light of this promise of unending life?

I should live in joyful expectation of the fullness of my transformation, soul and body, into the likeness of Christ, as a part of the renewal of the whole creation. In the midst of life's difficulty and suffering, and in the face of hostility and persecution for my faith, I am sustained by this hope and the knowledge of our triune God's eternal love for me.