

# HOLINESS T O D A Y

HT  
HOLINESS  
T O D A Y

## WE BELIEVE

1

In one God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2

That the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.

3

That man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore inclined to evil, and that continually.

4

That the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.

5

That the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.

6

That believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7

That the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.

8

That our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

ONE LORD  
ONE FAITH  
ONE BAPTISM

ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS FOR FAITH FORMATION  
IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE



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IF PEOPLE ARE INTENSE  
WORSHIPERS OF  
**GOD, THEY**  
CANNOT BE  
SHALLOW OR  
LISTLESS IN THEIR  
**THINKING.**

**—PHINEAS F. BRESEE**

FIRST GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

**“[FATHER], THIS IS ETERNAL  
LIFE: THAT THEY KNOW YOU, THE ONLY TRUE GOD,  
AND JESUS CHRIST,  
WHOM YOU HAVE SENT.”**

**JOHN 17:3**

**“SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO  
ONE ELSE, FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME  
UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN  
TO MANKIND BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED.”**

**ACTS 4:12**

**“JESUS SAID,  
'I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND  
THE LIFE. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER  
EXCEPT THROUGH ME.' IF YOU  
REALLY KNOW ME, YOU WILL KNOW  
MY FATHER AS WELL.”**

**JOHN 14:6-7**

## **A RIGHTLY FORMED FAITH**

Every organization that survives over time can attribute its longevity to a deeply shared combination of purpose, belief, and values. So it is with the Church of the Nazarene. It came into existence to preach, teach, and model holiness of heart and life as the missional core of its vocation to make Christlike disciples in the nations. Our present and our future as a denomination depend on our faithful participation in the mission of God and our embrace of the distinctive vocation God has given us as one of many Christian denominations.

As our denomination expands globally, it is appropriate to identify not only our distinctives, but how our theology derives from Holy Scripture, and harmonizes with the church's tradition over two millennia, with human reason enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and with Christian experience. *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene*, is just such an initiative.

Our spiritual ancestors developed creeds, confessions, and catechisms because they feared the Christian life would lose its distinctive shape unless believers could publically affirm and embrace with conviction Christianity's core persuasions. The Christian faith is more than head knowledge or rote recitation of dogma. It is a specific way of life with a pattern that can be described. For example, Christian hope is not simply the power of positive thinking, but a more specific expectation that God can bring reconciliation out



of the dysfunction and despair of sin, and raise new life out of death. In our tradition, we express that hope as the optimism of grace. A constant refrain in preaching and instruction based on the Scriptures, creeds, confessions, and traditions is that the core convictions of faith cannot be based on vague sentiments and subjective opinions.

Indeed, doctrines are intended to articulate the basic underlying principles already being practiced in the Christian community. A document, like a communal profession, or what some churches call a catechism, possesses a degree of institutional authority since it grows out of the life of the church. As we look to the ancient creeds, the theological confessions, and other historic faith forming documents, we discover patterns of faith formation that have the power to speak to new generations in the unusual and challenging contexts of the 21st century. *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* seeks to continue these historically extended conversations of the past with the present as we help new generations of faithful Christians advance our denomination's core values: Christian, holiness, missional.

The overarching vision for this document intends more than presenting information about God or the divine plan for our salvation. Ultimately this document seeks to center our worship on God and God alone. He deserves all honor and glory. Our highest praise and adoration must flow from all that is read and understood in these paragraphs. "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Four patterns for this new faith formation initiative shape the template of *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*. The Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the sacraments, and the Lord's Prayer compose a new setting for exploring and understanding the Christian faith as espoused by the Church of the Nazarene in its Wesleyan-holiness theological tradition.

*One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* follows the four patterns of classical faith formation:

1. The Apostles' Creed
2. The Sacraments
3. The Ten Commandments
4. The Lord's Prayer

# BACKGROUND CONVERSATIONS

## 1. What is *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*?

*One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* is the designated title for a comprehensive faith formation initiative for Nazarenes around the world (Ephesians 4:4-6).

## 2. What is the purpose of *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene*?

It espouses the essential doctrines that Nazarenes confess and practice as part of a global community of Christians in many denominational expressions worldwide using a traditional, centuries-old template for instruction in the faith of the Christian church.

## 3. Who provided the impulse for the development of *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene*?

The Board of General Superintendents authorized the development of this document as a means of encouraging theological and doctrinal coherence among members of the global Nazarene family.

## 4. What is the format of *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene*?

It follows the Christian tradition of faith formation (catechism) using a question-and-answer format with appropriate annotations and explanations from Holy Scripture, the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene, and key denominational documents.

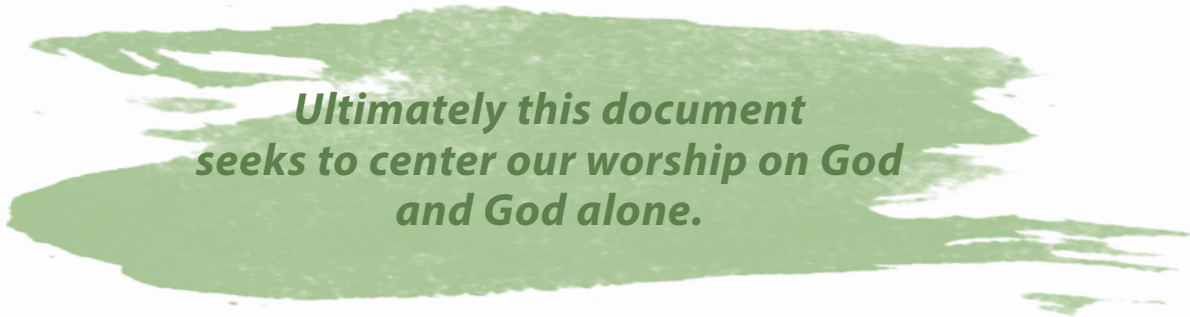
## 5. How is *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* organized?

It is broken out into four major sections called "patterns for Christian faith formation."

## 6. What are the patterns of *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene*?

The four patterns are:

1. The Apostles' Creed: orthodox theology, or what the church believes.
2. The Sacraments: sacramental theology, or what the church celebrates.
3. The Ten Commandments: moral theology, or what the church lives.
4. The Lord's Prayer: devotional theology, or what the church prays.



*Ultimately this document  
seeks to center our worship on God  
and God alone.*

**7. How do we understand the purpose of the first pattern for Christian faith formation, the Apostles' Creed?**

The Apostles' Creed is the story of salvation history in miniature.

**8. How do we understand the purpose of the second pattern for Christian faith formation, the sacraments?**

The sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism celebrate the grace of God in the shared life of the church on its pilgrim journey.

**9. How do we understand the purpose of the third pattern for Christian faith formation, the Ten Commandments?**

The Ten Commandments offer an introduction into understanding God's desire for our relationship with Him and with one another. They help guide and shape our personal story. The commandments show us how to live out our magnificent story as a Christlike disciple. Jesus clarified the place of the commandments for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Specifically, in Matthew 5:17-48 He admonished us to grasp God's highest intentions for our lives as reflected in the spirit of the commandments.

**10. How do we understand the purpose of the fourth pattern for Christian faith formation, the Lord's Prayer?**

The Lord's Prayer is the sublime model for all the forms of prayer that illuminate the believers' reading of Scripture, give substance to public worship, enrich small groups in fellowship and intercession, and shape our personal devotional experience.

# SALVATION HISTORY

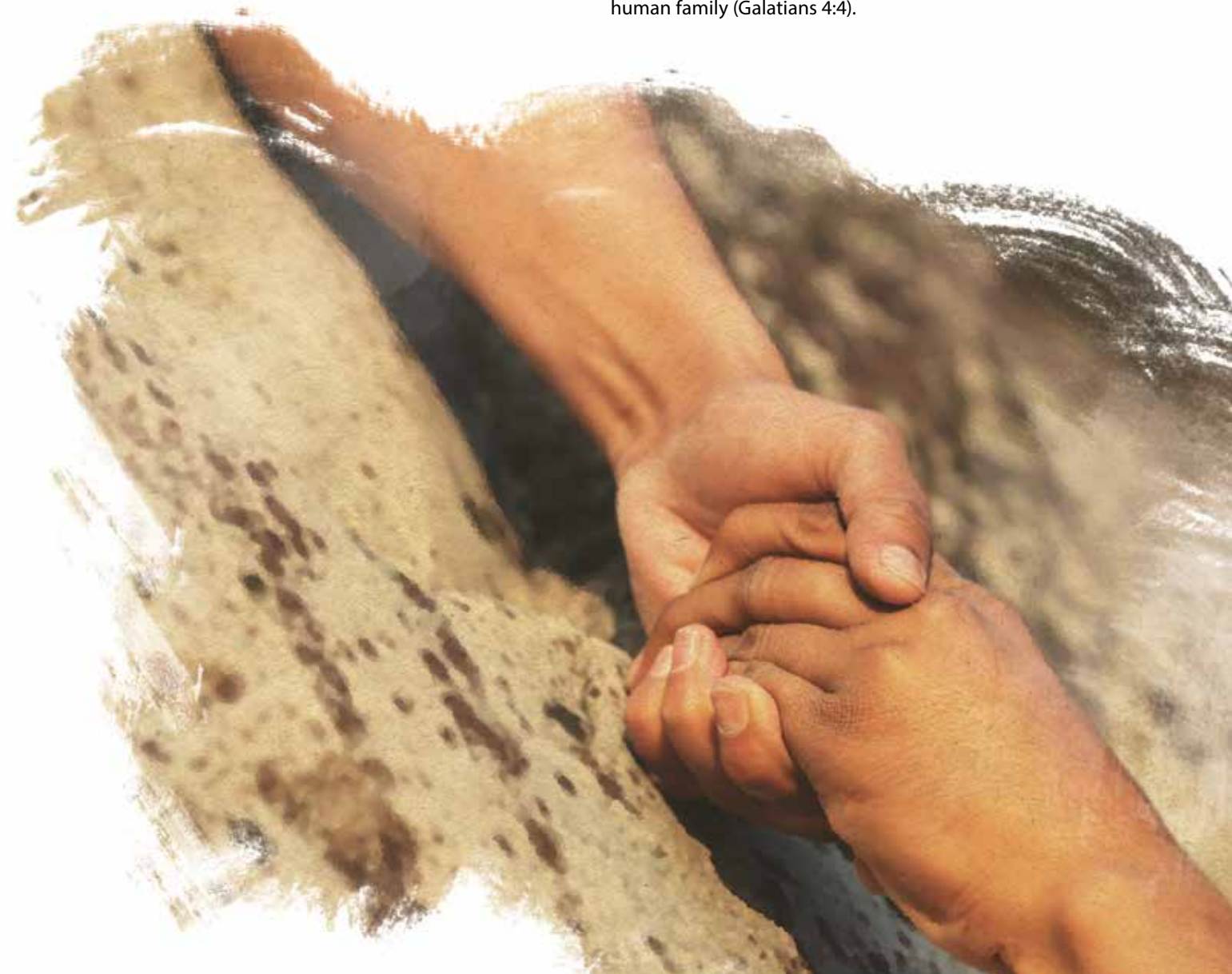
## CREATION, INCARNATION, PROCLAMATION

**11. What are the early events of salvation history?**

These are the first things that prepare us for the formation of faith in the Christian life. We acknowledge the God, who is infinitely perfect and who, motivated by holy love, freely created man and woman to share in God's own life (Genesis 1:27). Even when the first human beings broke their relationship with God, God pursued them, offering forgiveness and reconciliation. Throughout salvation history, God continued to call the peoples of the world, scattered and broken by their disobedience and spiritual dysfunctions, to come to

Him, to know Him, to love Him—heart, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Luke 10:27-28).

Then, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, the Word, into the world as Redeemer and Savior to accomplish God's holy will for the human family (Galatians 4:4).



## 12. What is Jesus' role in salvation history?

In and through Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh (Incarnation), God continued calling all people everywhere to become God's adopted children by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). To reach the entire world with God's good news, Christ chose apostles, sent them into the world, and commissioned them to proclaim the gospel—the good news that the kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). Empowered by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's witnesses (John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8), the apostles "went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it" (Mark 16:20).

## 13. What is the Christian's role in salvation history?

Those who have freely responded to Christ's call to follow Him are motivated by their love for Him to take the good news everywhere. This gospel is a precious treasure (2 Corinthians 4:7), proclaimed first by the apostles, and then faithfully communicated by those to whom the apostles entrusted the message. All of Christ's followers are called to pass on the faith from generation to generation (Psalm 78:4), by professing the faith, by living the faith, by sharing the faith, and by celebrating the faith in worship, spiritual conversation, instruction, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND FAITH FORMATION

## 14. In what ways has the good news been transmitted?

It is God's intention for "all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). God wants everyone to know the good news about Jesus Christ, what the New Testament identifies as the gospel. Implicit in Christ's command to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) is the necessity of oral tradition in communicating the faith. Nevertheless, in addition to the living transmission of the good news through our verbal witness, we rely on Holy Scripture which is the gospel's proclamation in written form (Article of Faith 4).

## 15. Why do we believe Holy Scripture teaches the truth?

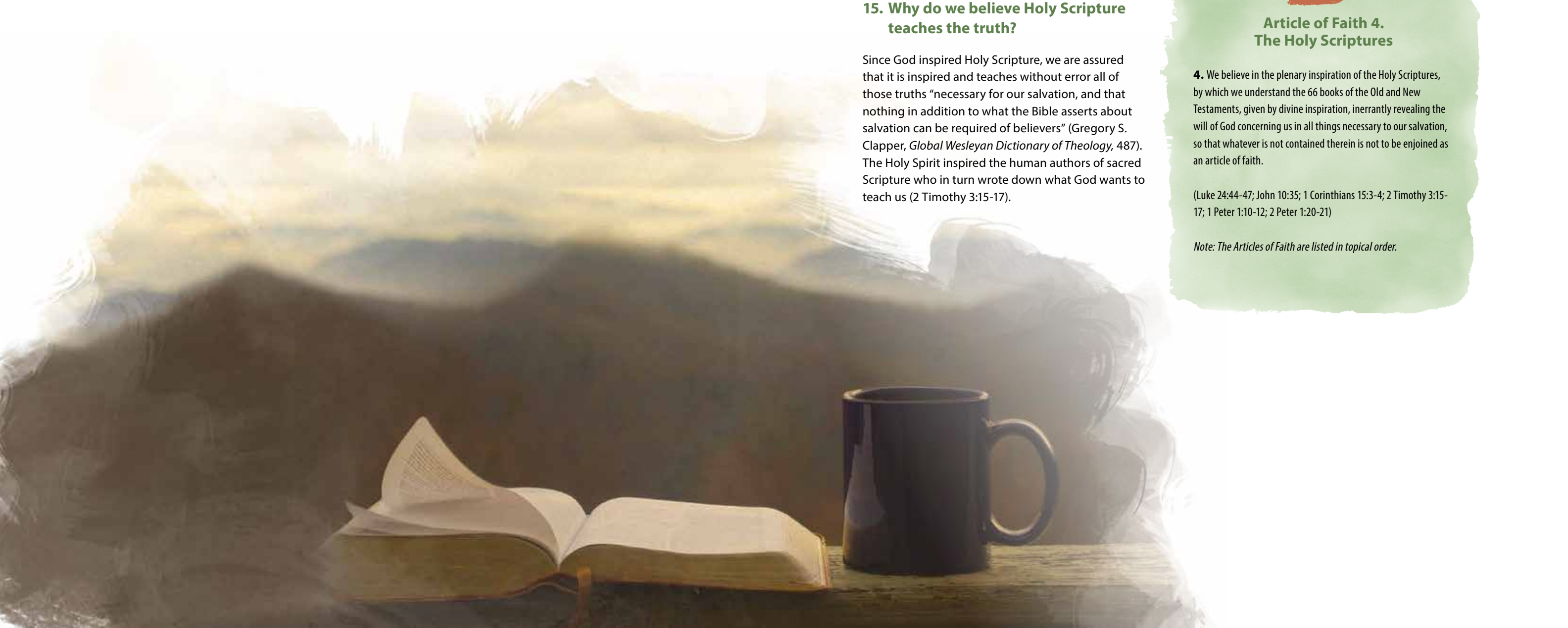
Since God inspired Holy Scripture, we are assured that it is inspired and teaches without error all of those truths "necessary for our salvation, and that nothing in addition to what the Bible asserts about salvation can be required of believers" (Gregory S. Clapper, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 487). The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of sacred Scripture who in turn wrote down what God wants to teach us (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

### Article of Faith 4. The Holy Scriptures

**4.** We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

(Luke 24:44-47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

*Note: The Articles of Faith are listed in topical order.*



## 16. Is there a distinctive Wesleyan perspective on Holy Scripture?

John Wesley was an 18th century minister and theologian in England who was one of the leaders of a great revival that spread around the world. Together with his brother Charles, he founded Methodism, a movement from which the Church of the Nazarene eventually arose. John Wesley emphasized tangible, observable lived obedience. “When Jesus’ disciples live as though their sins have been forgiven, when they exhibit a radical witness of humble love . . . then the divinely inspired nature of Scripture is evidenced . . . Wesleyans believe an incarnational witness to the Bible’s authority is far more convincing than arguments about the inerrancy or infallibility of the text itself” (Gregory S. Clapper, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 487-488).

## 17. What is in the Christian Scriptures, the Holy Bible?

The sacred writings of the church, known as the “Canon of Scripture,” comprise 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

## 18. Is the Old Testament important for Christians?

Christians affirm the Old Testament books as divinely inspired and bearing witness to God’s saving love. They reveal God’s unfolding story of salvation for humanity. Above all, they prepare God’s people for the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world.

## 19. What importance does the New Testament have for Christians?

The New Testament books reveal the ultimate truth of divine revelation, always disclosing the central person of the New Testament, Jesus Christ. The four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are the heart of Scripture because they are the principal witness to the life and teaching of Jesus. Thus, we give them a unique place in the work and witness of the church.

## 20. How do we understand the unity between the Old and New Testaments?

The Holy Scripture offers us a unified understanding of God’s self-revelation to humanity. God’s plan of salvation and the inspiration of both the Old and the New Testaments unfold God’s progressive revelation to us. The Old Testament prepares for the New Testament, and the New Testament fulfills the Old. Both shed light on each other. Scripture is a confirmation of the faith, nourishment for the soul, and the source of instruction for the faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

## 21. What is a catechism?

Early on in church history, the term catechesis (cah-te-key-sis) came to describe the church’s efforts to instruct disciples, forming them in Christlike character and virtue, thus building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13). In that tradition, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* continues the mandate of Christ to make disciples of all nations; to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and to teach (catechize) obedience to everything Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

## 22. What is the importance of One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism to the Church of Nazarene?

*Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* is the first phase of a collaborative effort at an organic synthesis of the fundamental expressions of Nazarene doctrine. It is suggestive, not exhaustive, in its scope. We examine Holy Scripture, our Wesleyan-Arminian theological tradition with its emphasis

on entire sanctification and practical holiness, and the Church of the Nazarene’s core statements of belief, namely the Articles of Faith, the Agreed Statement of Belief, and the Covenant of Christian Character (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, ¶1-21.3).

*Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* can thus be considered a baseline of doctrinal and theological understanding for indigenous faith-formation resources created by and for Nazarenes in and for various ethnic and language groups around the world. It is a work in progress which will develop with time and continued reflection.

THE HOLY  
SCRIPTURE  
OFFERS US A UNIFIED  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF GOD’S  
SELF-REVELATION TO HUMANITY.





# THE APOSTLES' CREED

## 23. Pattern One—The Apostles' Creed, or what the church believes

"Because the church's mission requires it to engage the whole of life, from the beginning it has thought and spoken very carefully. From time to time the church has in creeds carefully stated its beliefs. The word "creed" is from the Latin *credo*, "I believe." Very early, creeds were incorporated into the disciplines by which converts entered the church's life . . . The Apostles' Creed . . . seems to have grown from a second-century Roman baptismal creed and to have achieved its current form around AD 700. It acknowledges the Father and the Spirit, the church, the resurrection of the flesh, forgiveness, and unending life. But most of it focuses on Jesus Christ . . . The creed stresses His crucifixion, descent into hell, resurrection, ascent to the Father, and future return to judge the world" (Russell Lovett, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 137-138).

*"I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth"*

## 24. What is the Apostles' Creed?

The Apostles' Creed is the story of salvation history in miniature. The opening declaration of our faith expressed in the creed begins with God revealed as the Father, who created heaven and earth, the origin and the foundation of all God's works. Thus, our confession of faith acknowledges the first divine person of the Holy Trinity and affirms that God is the First and the Last, both the origin and consummation of all things (Article of Faith 1).

## 25. Why does our profession of faith begin with "I believe in God?"

The affirmation "I believe in God" is the source of all other truth about humankind and the world, as well as about the lives of everyone who believes in God. It is our faith in God that leads us to turn to Him as our origin and enables us to prefer nothing more than Him, nor substitute anything for Him.

## 26. Why do we profess our belief in only one God?

To the people of Israel, who were His chosen ones, God revealed Himself as One. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29). We understand that God identifies Himself as the One who is, for "If God is not One,

### The Apostles' Creed

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, dead, and buried;  
He descended into hell; 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 shall come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic [universal] church,  
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.



### Article of Faith 1. The Triune God

1. We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe; that He only is God, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose. The God who is holy love and light is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
(Genesis 1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1-7; 40:18-31; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 14:6-27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:13-18; 1 John 1:5; 4:8)

By disclosing His name, God communicates the mystery of His Divine Being. God is from everlasting to everlasting, transcending the world and its history. He is the creator of heaven and earth, and the always faithful God, coming close to His people to save them. As the "I AM WHO I AM," God is the fountainhead of all life, all truth, and all love.

### 29. What is the central mystery of the Divine Being?

The Holy Trinity is the fundamental mystery of the Christian faith and the believer's life. We have little knowledge of the Trinity before the Incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The church professes a Trinitarian faith in its belief in the Oneness of God revealed in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each one equally possesses the fullness of the one-and-indivisible divine nature. They are inseparable in their one substance and also in their activity (Article of Faith 1).

### 30. Why do we affirm, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)?

The creation is the key to understanding the broad scope of God's saving purposes. Creation discloses the power and beauty of God (Psalms 8; 19:1-6). It also takes the first step in narrating human salvation, a faith history culminating in Christ. It is the first answer to the ultimate questions concerning both our origin and destiny.

### 31. Who created the world?

The One God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the sole and indivisible agent of creation (Colossians 1:15-17). God declares His glory, goodness, truth, and beauty through His creative acts (Psalm 19).

### 32. What did God create?

When believers make their profession of faith, they proclaim that God is the Creator "of all that is, seen and unseen" (Nicene Creed, AD 325). "The good creation reflects the holy, loving, perfectly good God who stands in sharp contrast to the self-centered, capricious gods worshiped in other societies and the chaos they created" (Russell Lovett, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 136).

He is not God" (Tertullian the theologian). God further describes Himself as "abounding in love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). Yet, even when God does reveal Himself, God remains a mystery beyond complete explanation.

### 27. What is the name by which God reveals Himself?

God disclosed Himself to Moses as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). He used the mysterious name "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14) to set Him apart from all other gods. Jesus also identified Himself with the divine name "I AM" (John 8:28). Both names establish God as the source of all being.

### 28. Why is God's disclosure of His name important?

By disclosing His name, God communicates the mystery of His Divine Being. God is from everlasting to everlasting, transcending the world and its history. He is the creator of heaven and earth, and the always faithful God, coming close to His people to save them. As the "I AM WHO I AM," God is the fountainhead of all life, all truth, and all love.

### 33. What place does the human person occupy in creation?

The human person is the apex of visible creation since he or she is created in the image of God. Adam and Eve were capable of entering into communion with God and of loving their Creator in freedom.

### 34. How did sin begin?

Our first parents were also capable of violating the intimate relationship with their Creator. In fact, they were guilty of yielding to pride, breaking the bond of fellowship with God, and permitting trust in their Creator to die in their hearts. They ultimately forfeited for themselves and all subsequent descendants the original grace of holiness that had nourished their creation. Their sin became the sin of us all (Article of Faith 5).

### 35. How do we understand original sin?

Original sin is the self-centeredness and alienation from God and others prevalent in every person. Its presence is verified when we commit acts of sin. We understand sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God by a morally responsible person manifested either actively in sins of commission, or passively in sins of omission, or neglect (J. Gregory Crofford, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 500).

### 36. What did God do after sin entered the human race?

God did not abandon humankind to the power of death. Instead, God announced that evil would be defeated and that the human race would be redeemed (Genesis 3:15). This event was the first announcement of a Messiah-Redeemer (Article of Faith 6).

*"And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord"*

### 37. What is the significance of the name "Jesus?"

The name "Jesus" means "God saves." The name is a declaration of both the identity and the mission of Jesus since "he will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The name also became the proclamation of the church as Peter announced that "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).



### Article of Faith 5a. Sin, Original and Personal

5. We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin.

5.1. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually. We further believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

5.2. We believe that original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited propensity to actual sin for which no one is accountable until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected.

(Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1-8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8)



### Article of Faith 2. Jesus Christ

2. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us.

(Matthew 1:20-25; 16:15-16; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-18; Acts 2:22-36; Romans 8:3, 32-34; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-22; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-5; 7:22-28; 9:24-28; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2-3, 15)

### 38. What is the meaning of the title “Christ?”

The title “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew title “Messiah” meaning the “anointed one.” Jesus is the Christ because He is anointed by the Holy Spirit for the redemptive mission of the Father to “give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

### 39. How do we learn from Scripture that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God?

On two occasions—at His baptism and during the transfiguration—the voice of the Father proclaimed Jesus the “beloved Son” (Luke 3:22; Mark 9:7). He was sent into the world from God as “the One and only Son” (1 John 4:9).

*The incarnation means that  
Jesus was human just as much as we are  
human . . . Jesus was divine just as  
much as God is divine.*

### 40. What do we mean when we say “Jesus is Lord?”

We mean there is no higher authority or power. Thus, the church confesses Jesus as “Lord”—a confirmation of His sovereignty. Jesus also attributed the title to Himself by asserting His authority over the realms of nature, evil, disease, and death. His resurrection validated His authority over all things. The Apostles’ Creed confesses in one and the same breath “that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

*“Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary”*

### 41. What is the meaning of “incarnation?”

The word “incarnation” signifies the mystery in which the second person of the Trinity, God’s Son, the Word, “became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (John 1:14). To bring about our salvation, God became truly man. In our finitude and sin, we could not ascend to God to bring about our salvation, so God instead descended to us. Faith in the incarnation is a distinctive aspect of the Christian faith (Craig Keen, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 258).

### 42. How do we understand the mystery of the incarnation?

The incarnation means that Jesus was human just as much as we are human. At the same time Jesus was divine just as much as God is divine. We confess that His divine nature and His human nature are not confused with each other. Rather, they are perfectly united in the Word that became flesh. This view leads to the orthodox doctrine that Jesus Christ is fully God, fully human, and one person. It also leads to the doctrine of the Trinity (Craig Keen, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 258).



### 43. What is the meaning of the phrase “conceived by the Holy Spirit?”

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that “the Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (Luke 1:35). Thus, the phrase means that Mary, although a virgin, conceived the eternal Son in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit and without the cooperation of a man.

### 44. What is the meaning of the phrase “born of the Virgin Mary?”

The One, who was conceived in Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born into the world like every other child (Matthew 1:20; 2:1).

### 45. How may we understand the life of Christ?

We begin to understand the life of Christ in His obedience to Mary and Joseph. There we see the image of His obedience to the Father. His visible life on earth pointed to His invisible glory as Son: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). His redemptive mission was “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10), with the singular purpose of restoring the image of God in humankind.

### 46. Why did Jesus allow Himself to be baptized by John?

Jesus inaugurated His public ministry in anticipation of the “baptism” of His death and to identify with those He came to save. Thus, Jesus accepted the “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3) so He could be “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). Jesus was the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Father affirmed the ministry of His Son at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:16-17).

### 47. What do the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness teach us?

The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness remind us of the testing of Israel in the desert. Satan tested Jesus’ faith regarding His obedience to God. As the new Adam, Jesus resisted the temptation to find a way other than His Father’s way of achieving His mission. The victory He won during the 40 days of testing anticipated the supreme obedience He demonstrated during His trial and crucifixion (Philippians 2:8; John 17).

### 48. Why did Jesus announce the kingdom with signs and miracles?

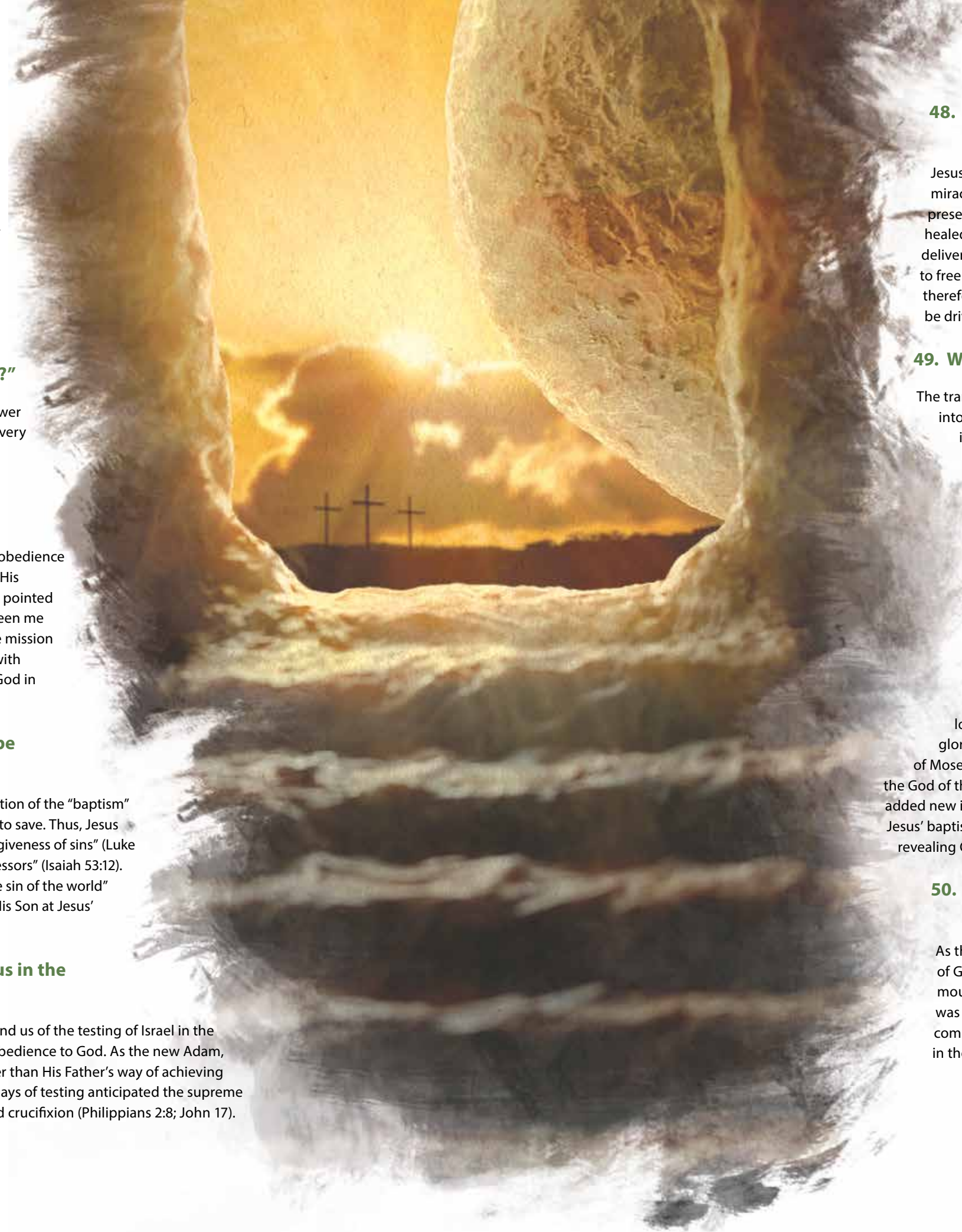
Jesus announced the kingdom with signs and miracles to testify to the reality of the kingdom’s presence in Him. Thus He is Messiah. While He healed many from their physical diseases and delivered others from demonic oppression, He came to free us especially from slavery to sin. His life is, therefore, a sign that “the prince of this world will be driven out” (John 12:31).

### 49. What was the transfiguration?

The transfiguration of Jesus added great insight into His identity and messianic ministry. It identified Him as the Son of God and God’s spokesperson. We learn in His transfiguration of the special honor and glory Jesus possessed as God’s Son. It connected the earthly with the heavenly and placed Jesus as the One who most clearly revealed the eternal realm to us. It disclosed that His glory would come by way of the cross (Luke 9:31). It connected His baptism, where the Father declared Jesus to be His Son, with His heavenly glory. It anticipated His resurrection and His coming again when His power “will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). The appearance of Moses and Elijah reminded us that God “is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). It added new insight into the gospel narrative as it joined Jesus’ baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension in revealing Christ’s identity and mission to the world.

### 50. What did Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem mean?

As the Messiah-King, Jesus unveiled the coming of God’s kingdom by entering into the city mounted on a donkey as anointed deliverer. He was acclaimed by the people: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna (save us) in the highest heaven” (Matthew 21:9).





## Article of Faith 6. Atonement

6. We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of those incapable of moral responsibility and for the children in innocence but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe.

(Isaiah 53:5-6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46-48; John 1:29; 3:14-17; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 3:21-26; 4:17-25; 5:6-21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 1:3-4; 3:13-14; Colossians 1:19-23; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11-14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:19-25; 1 John 2:1-2)

*"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried"*

### 51. How are we to understand the mystery of Christ's suffering, crucifixion, and death?

The suffering, crucifixion, and death of Christ, along with His resurrection, stand at the center-point of Christian faith because through them and in them, God's saving purposes for the human race were revealed to the world through the redeeming death of His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

### 52. Why was Jesus condemned to death?

Jesus was condemned to death because He proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God (John 19:7) and seemed to hold the sacred center of Judaism's faith, the Temple, in contempt because He was foretelling the temple's destruction. Instead, He pointed to Himself as the ultimate dwelling place of God among His people. In the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and worthy of death. Since the Jewish leaders were not permitted to execute anyone,

they handed Him over to Pilate so Roman rulers could sentence Him to crucifixion.

### 53. How did Jesus offer Himself to His Father?

Jesus presented Himself to the Father "as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). His entire life was an offering to God as He carried out the plan of salvation. His death disclosed how His humanity was the expression of a divine sacrificial love that seeks the salvation of all people. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

### 54. What happened in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Recognizing the agony of the horror to come, the human will of Jesus as the Son of God remained obedient in humility to the will of the Father. There He freely accepted His role as the atoning sacrifice for sins in the full obedience of His love to the very end (John 13:1).

### 55. Did Jesus truly die?

Christ died a real death, witnessed by the Roman soldiers, the Jewish religious leaders, and His followers (Matthew 27:45-56). He received a true earthly burial which Joseph of Arimathea requested, Pilate ordered, and several of His disciples witnessed (Matthew 27:57-61).

*"He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead"*

### 56. How do we identify the "hell" (Hades) into which Jesus descended?

The hell or Hades referred to in the Apostles' Creed does not refer to the hell of the impenitently lost. It was a place for all those who died before Christ, awaiting their Redeemer (1 Peter 3:19-20). In conquering

death and the devil, Jesus "descended to the lower, earthly regions" so that he could ascend on high, setting captive souls free and leading them in a triumphal ascent into heaven (Ephesians 4:7-10).

### 57. What place does the resurrection of Jesus hold in the Christian faith?

The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of Christian faith and brings the mystery of redemption to its consummation. It validated everything Jesus said and did in His earthly ministry and proved that the Father has ultimate power over death itself.

### 58. What are the signs of the resurrection of Jesus?

First, the tomb was empty. Secondly, women who encountered Christ witnessed to His resurrection and immediately told the disciples who had gathered behind locked doors in the Upper Room in fear for their lives. Thirdly, Jesus later "appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time" (1 Corinthians 15:5-6). Then the apostle Paul confirmed that the resurrected Lord "appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to Paul himself as one born later" (1 Corinthians 15:7-8). Signs of Jesus' resurrection continue to this day as His resurrection power transforms believers into Christlike disciples.

### 59. How is the Trinity involved in the resurrection?

The resurrection implies a Trinitarian action. The Son laid down the life He freely offered, only "to take it up again" (John 10:18). By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Father raised Christ from the dead, the first-fruit of our resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

### 60. What is the redemptive purpose of the resurrection?

The resurrection verified the deity of Christ, confirmed all of the teachings and miraculous signs of the kingdom, and fulfilled the promises God made in Genesis 3:15, as well as to His people, Israel, through the prophets and the psalmists. The resurrected Christ is the basis of our justification and sanctification and because of Him, we experience the joy of adoption, "that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a child of God" (Article of Faith 9.2).

*"He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty"*

### 61. What does the ascension mean?

The ascension means that the Lord in His humanity reigns in the eternal glory reserved for the Son of God who is in constant intercession for us before the Father. The Father and the ascended Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to assure us of our salvation and nourish within us the hope of heaven. Christ is now in heaven interceding for us (Article of Faith 2).

### 62. How does the ascension affirm Christ's victory?

The ascension of Christ into heaven affirmed Christ's victory over the cross, death, and the grave. He now sits at the right hand of the Father testifying to His victory over all earthly foes. His victory guarantees our ultimate victory as we confidently affirm, "Jesus is Lord!" (1 Corinthians 15:55-57; 1 John 5:4).



### Article of Faith 15. Second Coming of Christ

**15.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again; that we who are alive at His coming shall not precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus; but that, if we are abiding in Him, we shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air, so that we shall ever be with the Lord.

(Matthew 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:26-28; 2 Peter 3:3-15; Revelation 1:7-8; 22:7-20)



### Article of Faith 16. Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

**16.** We believe in the resurrection of the dead, that the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits—"they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

**16.1.** We believe in future judgment in which every person shall appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life.

**16.2.** We believe that glorious and everlasting life is assured to all who savingly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord; and that the finally impenitent shall suffer eternally in hell.

(Genesis 18:25; 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 50:6; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; 20:27-38; John 3:16-18; 5:25-29; 11:21-27; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:1-16; 14:7-12; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:1-15)



### Article of Faith 3. The Holy Spirit

**3.** We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

(John 7:39; 14:15-18, 26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:33; 15:8-9; Romans 8:1-27; Galatians 3:1-14; 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; 4:13)

*"From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead"*

### 63. How do we understand the coming of Jesus in glory will happen?

The glorious appearing of Christ the second time will take place at the end of time, often referred to in Scripture as "the Day of the Lord" (Luke 21:28; 2 Peter 3:10-12), and "if we are abiding in Him, we shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air" (Article of Faith 15). The decisive triumph of God and the Last Judgment will occur and the kingdom of God will, at last, be recognized by all people.

### 64. What do we mean when we say Christ will judge the living and the dead?

We mean that Jesus Christ, who came to bring salvation to all, will judge the world as its Redeemer. The secrets of the heart will be disclosed, and the conduct of our lives will be brought to light. Everyone will either experience the reward of heaven or be separated from the fullness of God for all eternity. In either case, Christ will hand "over the kingdom to God the Father . . . So that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28).

*"I believe in the Holy Spirit"*

### 65. What do we mean when we make the confession: "I believe in the Holy Spirit?"

When we say we believe in the Holy Spirit, we profess faith in the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. We affirm the Nicene creedal





statement: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets" (Nicene Creed, AD 325).

### 66. What do we mean when we say the Holy Spirit is the Giver of Life?

God, author of all life, breathed life into Adam and brought him into existence (Genesis 2:7). Spiritually speaking, we believe the Spirit is "sent . . . into our hearts" (Galatians 4:6) so that we may receive new birth as the children of God and experience the sanctifying fullness of the Spirit's presence (Articles of Faith 3). God gave the prophet Ezekiel a clear image of this new birth when He led him to the Valley of Dry Bones. God's Spirit brings us new life just as He raised the dry bones to life (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

### 67. How are the missions of the Son and the Spirit indivisible?

From the creation of all things to the consummation of all things, when the Father sent the Son they likewise sent the Holy Spirit who joins us to Christ and nourishes us in the faith so that as adopted children we can call God "Father" (Romans 8:15). While the Spirit is invisible, we recognize the Spirit's presence in revealing the Word to us and by the Spirit's activity in the church (Romans 15:16). The Spirit testifies to and teaches about Christ as well as reminds of everything Christ said in His earthly ministry (John 14:26; 15:26). He brings glory to Christ by making Him known to us (John 16:14).

### 68. By what other titles or designations is the Spirit known?

The Holy Spirit is the proper name as the third Person of the Trinity. In addition, the Holy Spirit is identified by Jesus as the "Counselor" (Comforter) (John 14:16) and the "Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13). In other biblical references the Spirit is identified further as the "Spirit of Christ," (Romans 8:9-10; Acts 16:6-7; Philippians 1:19) the "Spirit of the Lord," (Isaiah 61:1; Judges 3:10, 6:34) and the "Spirit of God" (Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:3; 1 Samuel 10:10). The Holy Spirit is also the "Spirit of Glory" (1 Peter 4:14) and the "Spirit of the Promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

### 69. How did the Spirit "speak through the prophets?"

"Prophets" were those men and women who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim God's message to God's people. The Spirit brought the prophecies of the Old Testament to their ultimate fulfillment in and through Christ who revealed the Spirit throughout His teaching, healing, and liberating mission (Luke 4:18). After offering Himself as the supreme sacrifice for sin, Jesus promised the Spirit to the church when He breathed on the apostles after His resurrection (John 20:22). At the Ascension, Jesus told His disciples they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Article of Faith 3).

### 70. Why is Pentecost considered "the third great day of the church?"

The glorified Jesus poured out the Spirit in abundance just 50 days after His resurrection. The Day of Pentecost, a celebration of the church equally as important as Christmas and Easter, revealed the Spirit as a Divine Person, disclosing the full manifestation of the Holy Trinity. The mission of Christ and the mission of the Spirit became the mission of all believers who are called out of the world as the church and sent back into the world to proclaim the renewing, redemptive, and restorative love of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11).

### 71. What is the Spirit's ministry to the church?

The Spirit gives life to the church, builds the church up, and sanctifies believers by the truth (John 17:17). He restores the divine likeness lost by sin and prompts God's people to live in Christ. He intercedes "for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27). He dispatches believers into the world to testify to the gospel of Christ and unites them in ministry so that together they may bear "the fruit of the Spirit" (Article of Faith 3; John 15:26-27; Galatians 5:22).

*"the holy catholic [universal] church"*

### 72. What is the meaning of the word "church?"

The Bible refers to the *ecclesia*, "the called out ones" who come together to form the church. The word "church" identifies the people who respond to God's call in Jesus Christ and whom God gathers together from all over the earth. The church, sourced in the Trinity, is one, holy, universal, and apostolic, and is composed of all those who by faith in Jesus Christ have become the adopted children of the Father, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit (Article of Faith 11).



## Article of Faith 11. The Church

**11.** We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ, holy living, and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to share in the redemptive and reconciling ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit. The Church fulfills its mission by making disciples through evangelism, education, showing compassion, working for justice, and bearing witness to the kingdom of God.

The Church is a historical reality that organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms, exists both as local congregations and as a universal body, and also sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Exodus 19:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 8:11; 10:7; 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 17:14-26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 6:1-2; 13:1; 14:23; Romans 2:28-29; 4:16; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:3, 12-31; 14:26-40; 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15; Ephesians 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:1-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9-10)

### 73. What is the mission of the church?

The mission of the church is to proclaim the gospel that “Jesus is Lord” (Romans 10:9) through loving service in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ to advance the kingdom of God. The church is the evidence of God’s righteous kingdom on earth. It exists as the sign of God’s reconciling purposes for all humanity, discloses the ultimate unity God intends for the human family, participates with God in bringing the new creation, and works toward the reconciliation of all things (Romans 8:18-30; Ephesians 1; Article of Faith 11).

### 74. Why do we call the church the people of God?

The church is identified in Scripture as “the people of God” because God’s purposes set us apart—to sanctify us—in order to create one people. As Christ’s church, we have been gathered together in the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Article of Faith 11).

### 75. How is the church the body of Christ?

The risen Christ through the Holy Spirit joins believers to Himself. Additionally, those who trust in Christ are united among themselves in love. They form one body, the church, and their unity is expressed in the diversity of the church’s members and their functions (Romans 12:4-5).

### 76. How do we understand the phrase “the church is holy?”

Christ has given Himself in love for the church to sanctify it. The church’s holiness is a gift of the Father, through the Holy Spirit. The church dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in the church. The church is holy as it reflects the holiness of Christ. The Holy Spirit nourishes the church’s life through Christ’s love and calls each member to holiness. (1 Thessalonians 5:23).



#### Article of Faith 8. Repentance

8. We believe the Spirit of God gives to all who will repent the gracious help of penitence of heart and hope of mercy, that they may believe unto pardon and spiritual life. Repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God. We believe that all persons may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost. We believe that regenerate persons need not return to sin but may live in unbroken fellowship with God through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

(2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 32:5-6; 51:1-17; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:14-16; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:1-14; 13:1-5; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30-31; 26:16-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9)”

### 77. Why does the church proclaim the gospel to the whole world?

The church takes the gospel to the world because Christ commands it: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This missionary mandate (the *Missio Dei*, or mission of God) is sourced in the love of God who has sent His Son and poured out His Spirit because He “wants all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

*“the communion of saints”*

### 78. How do we understand the expression “communion of saints?”

The phrase refers to the spiritual relationship between people who by grace are united to the Risen Christ. All of these together form one family in Christ, to the praise and glory of the Holy Trinity.

*“the forgiveness of sins”*

*The church is holy as it reflects the holiness of Christ.*

### 79. Who has the authority to forgive sins?

Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, and the church has the mission to announce the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus in response to one’s confession (1 John 1:9). Peter declared the centrality of this message of forgiveness on the Day of Pentecost: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Forgiveness of sins is also at the heart of the Lord’s Prayer. Forgive us our debts, or trespasses, is correctly translated, “Forgive us our sins,” a request inseparable from the Christian’s willingness to forgive others (Luke 11:2-4).

*“the resurrection of the body”*

### 80. How do we understand the word “body?”

The term “body” or “flesh”—the whole person—refers to our human state of weakness and mortality. We believe in a God who creates “flesh,” and we believe in the Word made “flesh” who came to redeem “flesh.” Thus, when we say we believe in the resurrection of the body, we understand that confession of faith to mean the ultimate consummation of creation in the redemption of the flesh (Tertullian the theologian, “The flesh is the hinge of salvation”).

### 81. Is there a relationship between Christ’s resurrection and our own?

The church has always declared that Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever. In the same way, Jesus Christ will raise us all on the last day with an imperishable body and “we will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52), writes the apostle Paul. “Those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:29).

*“the life everlasting”*

### 82. What is life everlasting?

New redeemed life in Christ is eternal life. It begins in the heart of the believer and becomes the anticipation of a life that continues uninterrupted even in death. It is not simply a matter of duration, but a quality of living that the human mind cannot comprehend in its finite state. “The New Testament speaks of our already being ‘seated . . . with Him in heavenly places’ (Ephesians 2:6). It also asserts that Christians have even now reached the ‘heavenly Jerusalem,’ the city of the living God, where angels are in festal gathering and the spirit of the perfected righteous are assembled” (Kenneth Schenck, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 229).





# THE SACRAMENTS

## 83. Pattern Two—The Sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion

This second pattern of *Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* explains how God's salvation, accomplished once for all through the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Jesus and by the work of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the sanctifying work of Christ, is made present in the sacraments of the church. The sacraments include baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

Baptism is the sacrament of prevenient grace and a sign of the covenant of grace. God's faithfulness and the work of the Holy Spirit call from us a response of faith and growth in the Christian life. John Wesley said this growth is necessary for sanctification that will transform every corner of our existence. The sacrament that nourishes us in this growth is the Lord's Supper (Theodore Runyon, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 477-478).

## 84. How do we understand the purpose of the second pattern for Christian faith formation, the sacraments?

God accomplished His salvation plan once for all through the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Jesus and by the work of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the sanctifying work of Christ. This second pattern of *Essential Teachings for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene* explains how this salvation plan is made present in the sacraments of the church. The sacraments include baptism and Holy Communion.

## 85. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a sacred action that Jesus commanded us to follow and uses physical elements, such as water, bread, and grape juice, to express outwardly what God does to redeem us. Sacraments are visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. They are given to us by Christ and entrusted to the church as efficacious means of grace for both our spiritual and physical senses. They are the sacred means by which we receive that grace (Articles of Faith 12 & 13).



## Article of Faith 7. Prevenient Grace

7. We believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight. We also believe that the human race's creation in Godlikeness included the ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus human beings were made morally responsible; that through the fall of Adam they became depraved so that they cannot now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God.

(2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 32:5-6; 51:1-17; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:14-16; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:1-14; 13:1-5; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30-31; 26:16-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9)

## 86. What do we mean when we say the sacraments are efficacious means of grace?

We mean that the sacraments enable believers to mature in God's grace, which we understand as God's undeserved favor and lovingkindness toward us. By grace, God forgives our sins; God illuminates our minds; God prompts our hearts to seek Him; and God strengthens our determination to do His will.

## 87. What sacraments do the Church of the Nazarene observe?

The Church of the Nazarene observes the sacraments of baptism (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38) and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion (Luke 22:19-20).

## 88. What is Christian baptism?

Christian baptism is the sacrament of prevenient grace for infants and children as well as a testimony of new life in Christ for believers. It provides the grace that starts us on a continuing journey (Theodore Runyon,



### Article of Faith 12. Baptism

12. We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement and incorporation into the Body of Christ. Baptism is a means of grace proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. It is to be administered to believers indicating their full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness. As participants in the new covenant, young children and the morally innocent may be baptized upon request of parents or guardians. The church shall give assurance of Christian training. Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

(Matthew 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22)

*Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 477). By immersion in water, the sprinkling of water, or pouring with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it identifies the believer's dying with Christ, being buried with Christ and rising with Christ as a new person. Baptism symbolizes the washing away of our sins through the death and resurrection of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in giving us a new life in God (Romans 6:3-4; Hebrews 10:22; Article of Faith 12).

## 89. What is a further significance of Christian baptism?

Christian baptism signifies a full commitment to be a Christlike disciple.

## 90. How is baptism anticipated in the Old Testament?

Many Old Testament images anticipated the meaning of New Testament baptism. Water was a symbol of the source of life and death. In the ark, Noah and his family were saved by means of water (1 Peter 3:20-21).

In passing through the parted waters of the Red Sea, God's people were set free from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 14:21-31). When they crossed through the waters of the Jordan River 40 years later, Israel entered into the Promised Land, the land God promised Abraham and his descendants (Joshua 3:1-4:3; Genesis 12:7). Baptism was part of the process for converting to Judaism hundreds of years prior to the New Testament and possessed great meaning for the Jewish people.

## 91. Who can receive the sacrament of baptism?

Infants and young children may be baptized as a symbol of God's acceptance within the community of Christian faith on the basis of prevenient grace (*Manual* ¶1702). All persons not yet baptized who have put their faith in Christ as Savior may also receive the sacrament of baptism.

## 92. Why does the church baptize infants?

Infant baptism may be administered in the Church of the Nazarene as an indication that a child is a member of God's family. The sacrament obligates the parents or guardians and community of faith to provide necessary Christian training so that the infant or child will know Christ and be able to follow Him. Infant baptism is a means of grace that starts the child on a continuing journey of Christian discipleship and eventually requires the child to acknowledge their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior (Article of Faith 12).

## 93. Are there special requirements for believers' baptism?

Believers who make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ may be baptized. We must renounce Satan, repent of our sins, and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The entire church shares responsibility for nurturing and safeguarding the faith of all who are baptized, adult and child alike.

## 94. What does the sacrament of baptism acknowledge?

Baptism incorporates those baptized into Christ and His church and acknowledges that the baptized participate in the life of the Holy Trinity. Water baptism symbolizes spiritual purification, that is, the inner working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. While it does not "guarantee permanent status," baptism nurtures within the baptized a sanctifying grace that begins the journey of faith. It is the sacrament of prevenient grace and a sign of the covenant of grace. It symbolizes the assurance we have that God will remain faithful to His covenant. We enter into covenant with God and promise to remain faithful in the covenantal relationship. It calls from the baptized a response of faith and intention to grow in the Christian life. According to John Wesley, "this growth is necessary for sanctification" (Theodore Runyon, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 477).

*Sacraments are visible signs of inward and spiritual grace.*



### Article of Faith 13. The Lord's Supper

**13.** We believe that the Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, proclaiming His life, sufferings, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the hope of His coming again. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. All are invited to participate by faith in Christ and be renewed in life, salvation, and in unity as the Church. All are to come in reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it show forth the Lord's death until He comes. Those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints are invited by Christ to participate as often as possible.

(Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:28-58; 1 Corinthians 10:14-21; 11:23-32)

### 95. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is the sacrament instituted by Jesus to nourish us in grace as a continuing remembrance of His life, death, and resurrection until He comes again. It also offers the community of faith an opportunity to experience the real presence of Christ in a special way. Sometimes called Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper is a reverent observance that uses bread and unfermented grape juice as symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus. Thus, we offer our thanksgiving to God for saving us through Christ's death and for welcoming us into the fellowship of His church as we eagerly await His return (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Article of Faith 13).

### 96. Why is Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper important?

"[John and Charles Wesley] had a strong sense of Christ's presence in the sacrament . . . through the Holy Spirit [who] brings Christ down to us . . . This interpretation also makes the Supper a Trinitarian event. The Spirit and the Son together make palpable, through the bread and the juice, the awareness of the Father's love toward us. The Supper is not a mere remembrance of Christ, a subjective memory of His suffering and death, but an objective participation in His resurrection life. And so the Communion is a means of transforming hearts and lives" (Theodore Runyon, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 478).

### 97. When did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?

On the Thursday night before His Good Friday sacrifice, the night of His betrayal (1 Corinthians 11:23), Jesus observed His final Passover meal with His disciples and used the moment to institute a "new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

### 98. By what other names is this sacrament known?

The most common names in addition to the Lord's Supper are the Eucharist (meaning "thanksgiving"), the Breaking of the Bread, and Holy Communion.

### 99. What are the required elements for the Lord's Supper in the Church of the Nazarene?

The elements of the Lord's Supper are bread and unfermented grape juice (*Manual* ¶700; see note appended to ¶ 700).

### 100. Why do we use these elements in observing the Lord's Supper?

The bread, often referred to as the fruit of the ground or the bread of life, symbolizes the offering of the broken, sinless body of Christ on the cross for our sins (Ephesians 1:7). The grape juice, often referred to as the fruit of the vine or the cup of salvation, signifies the blood of Christ which is His life poured out for our salvation (1 Corinthians 10:16).

### 101. Can anyone participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

All those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and who love their Christian brothers and sisters may take part in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Church of the Nazarene, following the tradition of John Wesley, believes that the Lord's Supper may be a converting ordinance. Individuals may come to Christ during the ritual and receive the elements as their first act of worship upon trusting Jesus Christ as Savior.

### 102. How does a follower of Christ prepare for the Lord's Supper?

We prepare for the Lord's Supper by reaffirming our complete trust in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross; by confessing to God any sins we may have committed, either sins of commission or of omission; and by expressing our thanks to Him for His forgiveness (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).



#### Article of Faith 14. Divine Healing

14. We believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science.

(2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 103:1-5; Matthew 4:23-24; 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 9:32-42; 14:8-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16)

healed those in need (Matthew 4:23-25).

The church recognizes that God may, and often does, cure our physical maladies and even emotional dysfunctions. God's Word encourages believers to pray with faith for the healing of those who are sick (Luke

9:11b; Acts 5:16).

### 105. Are there any actions one should take for divine healing?

Those who are sick can ask the leaders of the church to pray for them in faith and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. The Church of the Nazarene acknowledges these spiritual practices but believes the one who is sick takes the initial step of healing faith by asking for prayer and anointing with oil (James 5:14-15).

### 106. If believers pray for divine healing, should they avoid seeking medical advice or assistance from doctors or nurses?

Believers should seek medical help whenever possible with the understanding that God often accomplishes healing through the assistance and advice of others (Article of Faith 14; 1 Timothy 5:23).



# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## 107. Pattern Three—The Ten Commandments

The two tablets of the law include love for God and neighbor. In giving the Ten Commandments, God initiated covenant with His people. "I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12). [Thus], "privilege and responsibility are included in the Sinai covenant. The theme of covenant speaks of mutuality of relationships" (James W. Lewis, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 501).

New Testament believers read the Ten Commandments through the lens of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The spirit of Christ's teachings in this sermon helps us understand how the law instructs our faith journey with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## 108. What is meant by a covenant with God?

A covenant is a unique relationship initiated by God requiring a faith response from God's people. The old covenant, or the first covenant, included the promise that God would bring all the peoples of the world to Him through His chosen people, the Hebrews. In response, God expected His people "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). The old covenant is found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

## 109. Where in the Old Testament is God's will for us shown most clearly?

God's will for His people is expressed most explicitly in the Ten Commandments (Decalogue or Ten Words).

## 110. What are the Ten Commandments or Decalogue?

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17) are:

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an image.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.



### 111. What do we learn from the Decalogue?

We discover our duty first to God and then to our neighbors.

### 112. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments were given to God's people to explain our relationship with God and our neighbors, including our families and friends. Since we do not obey the commandments completely, they are a mirror that helps us to see our failure more clearly and our need for forgiveness and redemption (*Manual* ¶28.1).



#### Article of Faith 5b. Sin, Original and Personal

**5.3.** We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the spirit. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief.

(Personal sin: Matthew 22:36-40 {with 1 John 3:4}; John 8:34-36; 16:8-9; Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; 8:18-24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9-2:4; 3:7-10)

The Holy Spirit frees our will from its bondage to sin and makes active, obedient response possible. In our Wesleyan and Nazarene traditions, we refer to this grace of the Spirit as "prevenient grace" since it encourages the freed desires of human will, seeks the cooperation of the believer's will to obey, and ultimately leads the believer in freedom toward his or her perfection in love (Article of Faith 7).

### 116. What is the moral conscience?

Moral conscience is the fruit of prevenient grace in that the human person is enabled to understand the morality of a particular behavior and assume responsibility for the act. As a person pays attention to the moral conscience, he or she becomes attentive to the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to him or her.

### 113. What is sin?

One way of defining sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law by a morally responsible person (1 John 3:4). The transgression may be active, that is, sins of commission, or passive, that is, sins of omission, or neglect (J. Gregory Crofford, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 500). In its broadest sense, sin is any act or desire contrary to the law of God. It is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God. Thus, sin distorts our relationship with God, with other people, and with all of God's creation. As a violation of God's love, sin's fruit is its power over us, robbing us of our freedom.

### 114. What is freedom?

Freedom speaks to the possibility of choosing between good and evil. However, the human will, damaged by the fall, no longer chooses freely between good and evil. Through Christ's transformation our will is set free for faith by the direct work of God's grace. Only then may believers will to do good. Choosing good strengthens the moral conscience and fosters virtue.

### 115. What is the relationship between grace and human freedom?

### 117. What are the positive fruits of the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments not only show us our sin, but when observed and obeyed, they give birth to a life characterized by positive virtues. Positive virtues lead us to do what is good (Philippians 4:8). The Holy Spirit's presence at work in the believers' lives empowers them to do what is good and yield the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

### 118. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit encompasses the sanctified dispositions of the heart made pure in love, which according to Paul's masterwork on love (1 Corinthians 13) is the greatest virtue. The fruit of the Spirit is the fruit of Christ cultivated by the Holy Spirit and manifests itself as love, expressing itself in joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

### 119. How does the old covenant relate to the plan of salvation?

Even though the old covenant, or the Old Law, was holy and good, it was imperfect because by itself it could not generate the strength and the grace of the Spirit for one's obedience to it (Hebrews 9:9-10).

### 120. How does the new covenant relate to the plan of salvation?

The new covenant is the good news, or gospel, and is summed up in the Great Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" and to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27; see Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18). The ultimate expression of the Great Commandment is Christ's last command to His disciples in the upper room on the night of His betrayal: "Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Unlike the old covenant, the new covenant animates an interior reality enabling not only the possibility of obedience, but a deep desire to fulfill the law of love (Ezekiel 11:19-20). Only the work of the Holy Spirit, through prevenient grace, repentance, saving faith, justification, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification, makes such love possible (John 14:15-16).

### 121. What is justification?

Justification "depicts salvation as God's act of putting us in the right by virtue of Christ's blood, Christ's obedience, and our faith, which is itself God's gift." Thus, our justification is the activity of God to both declare us righteous and make us righteous. It occurs because we have been reconciled to God through Christ's death on the cross (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:22). Justification, made possible by means of the grace of



#### Article of Faith 9. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

**9.** We believe that justification is the gracious and judicial act of God by which He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

**9.1.** We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that gracious work of God whereby the moral nature of the repentant believer is spiritually quickened and given a distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience.

**9.2.** We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a child of God.

**9.3.** We believe that justification, regeneration, and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of seekers after God and are received by faith, preceded by repentance; and that to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

(Luke 18:14; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:39; Romans 1:17; 3:21-26, 28; 4:5-9, 17-25; 5:1, 16-19; 6:4; 7:6; 8:1, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 2:16-21; 3:1-14, 26; 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:1, 4-5; Philippians 3:3-9; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 1:9; 3:1-2, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 9-13, 18)



## Article of Faith 10. Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification

**10.** We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God's grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."

**10.1.** We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the divine impulse to grow in grace as a Christlike disciple. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavor, one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.

Participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines, and sacraments of the Church, believers grow in grace and in wholehearted love to God and neighbor.

(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; John 7:37-39; 14:15-23; 17:6-20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Romans 6:11-13, 19; 8:1-4, 8-14; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:17-18, 25-27; Philippians 3:10-15; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 4:9-11; 10:10-17; 12:1-2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9)

("Christian perfection," "perfect love": Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew 5:43-48; 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-21; 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians 3:10-15; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 4:17-18 "Heart purity": Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3 "Baptism with the Holy Spirit": Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9 "Fullness of the blessing": Romans 15:29 "Christian holiness": Matthew 5:1-7:29; John 15:1-11; Romans 12:1-15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Philippians 1:9-11; 3:12-15; Colossians 2:20-3:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7-8; 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:14; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:18; Jude 20-21)

the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of a person's free response of faith in Christ and his or her cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit (Samuel M. Powell, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 480).

### 122. How do we understand the sanctifying work of God's grace?

This grace is a gift of God that brings us into the fellowship of the Trinity and enables us to live in love. We also call it sanctifying grace because it sanctifies (sets apart and cleanses) us. It is supernatural because it depends entirely on God's initiative and surpasses our ability to comprehend God's grace in its fullness. This grace is effected by the infilling of the Holy Spirit and "comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit" (Article of Faith 10).

### 123. Are all persons called to Christian holiness?

Every believer in Christ is called to Christian holiness. Here is the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of love, brought about by intimate union with Christ and, in Him, with the Holy Trinity. We understand that the path to Christian holiness goes through the cross and comes to its consummation at the final resurrection when God will be all in all (Article of Faith 10).

### 124. Why is a consistent moral life of holiness essential for proclaiming the gospel?

Because when believers' lifestyles conform to the Lord Jesus, they draw others to faith in God. They will build up the church, witness with integrity by fulfilling the commandments, hasten the coming of God's righteous kingdom (2 Peter 3:11-12), and discover the joy of eternal life.

### 125. What must we do to gain eternal life?

When Jesus was asked what a person must do to gain eternal life, He replied that the young man should keep the commandments and then added these words, "Come, follow me" (Matthew 19:17, 21). Following Jesus causes us to seek to live as He lived. The old covenant, or law, was not abolished in Christ's new covenant but rediscovered in the One who fulfills the commandments perfectly in Himself (Matthew 5:17).

### 126. To what does the term "Decalogue" refer?

Decalogue means "ten words" (Exodus 34:28) and they summarize the Law that God gave the people of Israel through Moses. The Decalogue discloses the commandments of our love for God (first four) and our love for our neighbor (other six). Here is the believer's personal directive for a life freed from the slavery of sin.

### 127. What do we mean when we say the Decalogue is an organic unity?

We mean that the Ten Commandments form an inseparable unity. Each commandment refers to the other commandments and the Decalogue as a whole.

### 128. How is it possible to keep the Ten Commandments?

We can keep the Ten Commandments because Christ, without whom we can do nothing, empowers us to keep them through the gift of His Spirit in sanctifying grace (John 15:5; Philippians 4:13).

### 129. What is the first commandment and what is its meaning?

The first commandment is “I am the Lord your God. . . You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3). Our first obligation is to love and obey God and bring others to love and obey Him as well. This command forbids idolatry, superstition, polytheism, atheism, and all forms of irreligion. The “I AM THAT I AM” is alone to be adored as the Lord of everything that exists, and we are to give Him the worship that is due Him.

### 130. What is the second commandment and what is its meaning?

The second commandment is “You shall not make for yourself an image” (Exodus 20:4). We are not to allow anything to take the place of God, nor substitute any creation of humanity for God in our worship. An idol is anything that removes God from His rightful place as the sole object of our devotion and adoration.

### 131. What is the third commandment and how do we understand its significance?

The third commandment is “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:7). Our duty is to show respect for God’s holy Name by praising His name and glorifying Him in worship. The commandment forbids calling on the Name of the Lord for less than sacred purposes. This improper use of God’s holy Name is blasphemy and is a breach of the promises made in covenant with God.

### 132. What is the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment is “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8; *Manual* ¶121.2). We remember the Sabbath day because God blessed the seventh day in creation. We also remember God’s liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and the giving of the law when God sealed the Covenant with His people. We further celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave and the victory He won over all earthly foes.

### 133. What is the fifth commandment and what does it require of us?

The fifth commandment is “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12). It requires us to respect our parents and honor their God-instituted role of authority and responsibility. The commandment also implies the rightful ordering of marriage and family life. It especially admonishes children to show their parents respect as integral to their honoring of God in the same way parents should love and nurture their children, just as God loves and nurtures His children. Adult children have a responsibility to offer whatever support their aging parents may require in times of need.

### 134. Does the fifth commandment imply any obligation of parents to their children?

Implicit in the fifth commandment is the spiritual prominence of the family in God’s order of society. It also emphasizes the Christian home as the first community of faith to which a child belongs. This idea suggests that parents bear a unique responsibility for the nurture and education of their children as persons, and especially as children of their Father in heaven.

### 135. What is the sixth commandment and what is its significance for today?

The sixth commandment is “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). This commandment not only forbids the grave sin of intentional murder, or cooperation with it, but it requires one to approach issues like abortion, euthanasia, and war in the light of its Christian implications (see *Manual* ¶130, Induced abortion; ¶130.1, Euthanasia; ¶130.5, War and military service; ¶1903.7).



### 136. In reviewing the seventh commandment, how do we explain its significance?

Even though the Decalogue reads, “You shall not commit adultery,” (Exodus 20:14) by extension Christian tradition follows a comprehensive interpretation of both Old and New Testament statements regarding sexual purity. All followers of Christ are expected to live morally chaste lives, avoiding not only adultery but fornication, pornography, prostitution, rape, and homosexual acts (*Manual* ¶121.2; ¶131).

### 137. What is the eighth commandment and what does it prohibit?

The eighth commandment is “You shall not steal,” (Exodus 20:15) and requires respect for the property of others. By extension, it places high value on fulfilling promises made in a contract, and the restitution of things stolen. The eighth commandment thus prohibits not only theft, but may also be thought to include paying unjust wages, using another’s goods to profit personally, willfully damaging public or private property, doing work poorly by intentional neglect, stealing information or intellectual property, or fraudulent waste.

### 138. How does work relate to the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment encompasses theft by any number of dishonest and unjust activities. Since our work as Christians reflects God in his creative work, we must be aware that anything we do at work that in any way shortchanges either our employer or employees, and by extension the people served by the work, is dishonest, disloyal, and unjust (Colossians 3:17; 23-25).

### 139. What is the ninth commandment and how do we observe it?

The ninth commandment is “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16). This commandment forbids dishonest testimony, perjury, lying and all forms of slander, and defamation (*Manual* ¶121.2). Sins against the truth demand full restitution wherever it brings harm to others (Colossians 3:9-10).




**140. What is encompassed in the tenth commandment?**

The tenth commandment is "You shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17) and forbids thoughts or desires that lead to actions prohibited by the seventh and eighth commandments, "You shall not commit adultery" and "You shall not steal." By the grace of God and the work of the sanctifying Spirit, the baptized believer is enabled and empowered to discipline inordinate desires for things belonging to one's neighbor, including that person's spouse or any possessions. Such purity of intention within the thought-life of a Christian overcomes greed and undisciplined desires for the property or goods of others.

**141. What should be the highest desire of the human heart?**

Our most ardent desire should be a longing for God alone. As we Christian pilgrims walk in our faith, we realize that true happiness is found only in the One who created us out of love and who continually is inviting us into the joy of the infinite love of the Holy Trinity.

A hand is shown holding a heart-shaped object made of red, woven sticks or reeds. The heart is positioned on the left side of the image. The background is a soft, watercolor-style wash of light green and yellow tones. The overall composition is clean and minimalist.

**OUR MOST  
ARDENT DESIRE  
SHOULD BE  
A LONGING FOR  
GOD  
ALONE.**



# THE LORD'S PRAYER

## 142. Pattern Four—The Lord's Prayer

"Whether we think of, or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for Him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than His love, and the desire of pleasing Him. All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God" (*Wesley's Works*, 11:438).

## 143. How do we define prayer?

Prayer is lifting our thinking and believing into the presence of God, as well as asking Him for those good things that align with His will. Prayer is a divine gift; God always longs to encounter the human family. It flows from a personal and living relationship of believers with the Lord. God's Spirit dwells in believers' hearts and "intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:27) because in and of ourselves "we do not know what we ought to pray for" (Romans 8:26).

## 144. Who are some models of exemplary prayer?

Abraham walked in the presence of God; he demonstrates ideal prayer both in listening to God and obeying God. For Abraham, prayer was a struggle of faith that led him to believe in the faithfulness of God even at the time of testing (Genesis 15). Moses experienced prayer as intimacy with God "face to face, as one speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11). Moses interceded persistently for the Hebrew people as they journeyed to the Promised Land. The prayers of Moses anticipate the role of intercession by the one Mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

## 145. How is Jesus an example of the life of prayer?

All four gospels record Jesus spending time in prayer. He drew apart to pray in solitude, even at night. Jesus prayed before the decisive moments of His mission, as when He spent the night in prayer before choosing His apostles (Luke 6:12-13). In fact, all of His life was a prayer because Jesus was in continual communion with His Father.

## 146. What was the significance of prayer during Christ's passion?

During the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and His last prayers on the cross, Jesus revealed the depth of His loving relationship with the Father (John 17). These prayers fulfill the redemptive intentions of the Father as Jesus prepared to die on the cross for the redemption of lost humanity. Thus, Jesus carried all the prayers for a Savior throughout human history to heaven's throne; the Father answered those prayers when He raised His Son from the dead.

## 147. What are the essential forms of Christian prayer?

A good outline of Christian prayer appears in 1 Timothy 2:1-2:

- Worship, or doxology.
- Supplication, or petition.
- Intercession, or invocation.
- Thanksgiving, or benediction.

Christians, in fact, can follow the example of Jesus and embrace all of life as prayer. John Wesley considered prayer the most important means of grace and the principal activity in works of piety (personal holiness). Works of mercy (doing good) are also expressions of prayer. Christian prayer asks God for personal needs, prays for the consummation of God's kingdom, and intercedes for the salvation of all persons (Achim Hartner, *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology*, 425-426).

#### 148. What role does the Holy Spirit have in our prayers?

The Holy Spirit both prompts our prayers and fills us with God's presence (Luke 11:13). The Spirit becomes the master intercessor in our praying since "we do not know what we ought to pray for" (Romans 8:26-27).

#### 149. Why can prayer often be a struggle?

The Spirit's invitation to prayer, as an expression of God's grace, must always have an intentional response from us because we battle against many distractions, and our adversary does all he can to turn us away from prayer. This struggle in prayer is a spiritual battle and benefits our growth in grace. We must learn to pray as we live because we live as we pray.

#### 150. Is it possible to pray continually?

Prayer is an abiding disposition of Jesus' disciples because He always remains with us (Matthew 28:20). Prayer and the Christian life cannot be separated (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

#### 151. Who gave us the Lord's Prayer?

Jesus taught this prayer when a disciple saw Him praying. He asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Matthew's text has been the one most often used in the worship tradition of the church (Matthew 6:9-13).

#### 152. Why do we call this prayer the "Lord's Prayer?"

It is known as the "Lord's Prayer" since Jesus Himself taught the prayer. The prayer is often considered to be a summary of the whole gospel.

#### 153. What are the reasons for saying "our" Father?

In using the plural possessive pronoun "our," Jesus pointed to an entirely new relationship with God. As we pray to the Father, we adore Him together with the Son and the Holy Spirit. In Christ, we have become God's people, and He is "our" God forever. We also say "our" Father because we are a communion of brothers and sisters who have "one heart and mind" (Acts 4:32).

#### The Lord's Prayer

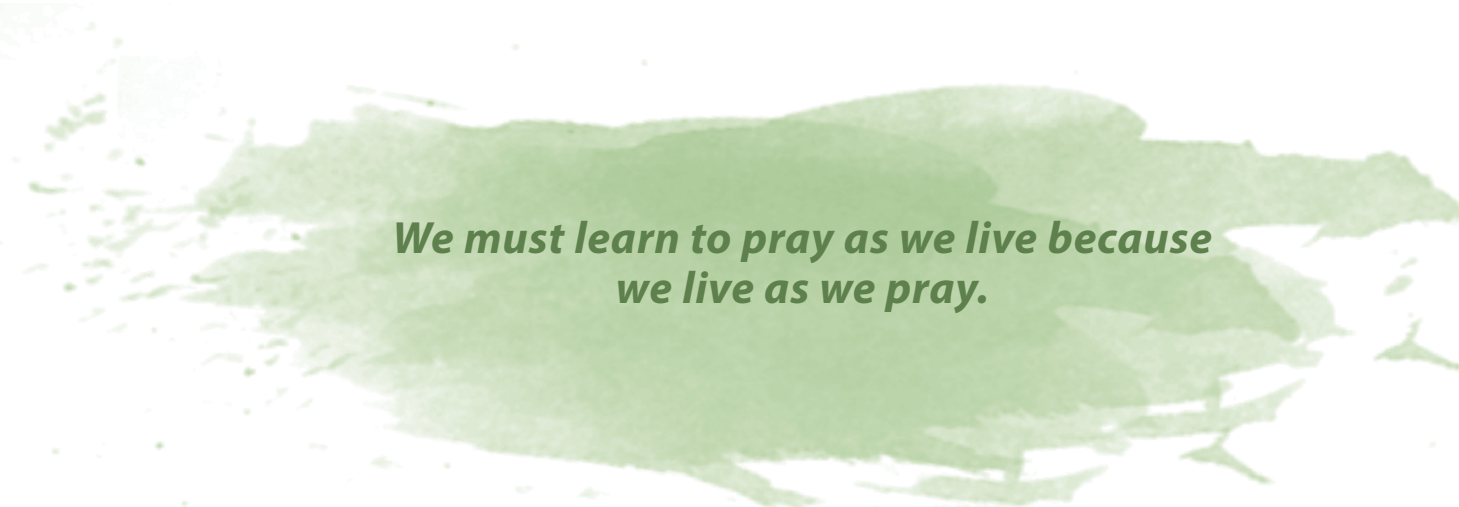
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:9-13

#### 154. How do we understand the words, "in heaven?"

These words do not identify a particular place but denote God's surpassing greatness. They refer to God's majesty, God's holiness, and God's presence. Heaven is our Father's house and our true home, the destination of the believer's journey of faith. Since believers are "hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3), they are already citizens of this new homeland.





***We must learn to pray as we live because we live as we pray.***

**155. What is the structure of the “Lord’s Prayer?”**

There are seven petitions to God, our Father, in the Lord’s Prayer. The first three are God-focused and point us to His glory. In a particular way, these petitions suggest what we need to ask for the sanctification of His Name, the coming of His kingdom, and the fulfillment of His will. The last four seek God’s merciful provisions for us. We ask Him to nourish us, to forgive us, to uphold us in temptation, and to defend us from the Evil One, who is the devil, or Satan.

**156. What does the phrase “Hallowed be your Name” signify?**

To hallow is to make holy and this phrase is a prayer of praise that recognizes God’s Name as one to be uniquely revered. God, who calls us “to live a holy life” (1 Thessalonians 4:7), revealed His Name to Moses as “I AM THAT I AM” and purposed to sanctify His people as a holy nation with whom He would dwell. We make holy the Name of God when our consecration animates our entire lives.

**157. Why do we pray, “Your kingdom come?”**

As the church, we pray for the final coming of the kingdom of God when Christ returns in glory. The church also prays that the kingdom will increase here on earth through our sanctification in the Spirit and our commitment to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

**158. Why should we pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?”**

The will of God is for “all people to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4). Jesus came to our world to bring this singular purpose of His Father to fruition. Our prayer is that God will unite our will to that of His Son so that this redemptive intention will be realized. Prayer helps us to discern “what God’s will is” (Romans 12:2) and gives us the perseverance to do that will (Hebrews 10:36).

**159. How do we understand the petition, “Give us today our daily bread?”**

Asking God with childlike faith for our daily nourishment helps us to recognize how good God is. Further, since “man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), this petition acknowledges our hunger for the Word of God and the need for the spiritual nourishment from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. It speaks as well about our soul’s desire for the Holy Spirit. We pray this prayer with confidence for each day as we acknowledge our daily dependence on God’s provision. His daily provision is enough just as the daily manna provided for Israel (Exodus 16). The petition also reminds us that we live in an in-between time. God’s kingdom has already come with the incarnation of Christ. We live daily in that victory. Yet, we anxiously await the final day for the consummation of God’s kingdom. Thus, we anticipate “the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9) in the kingdom to come.

**160. Why do we pray, “Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors?”**

When we ask our Father to forgive us, we are saying that we are included in the “all” who “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). At the same time, we testify to His mercy because in His Son “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). Our petition brings a response if we have forgiven first. God’s mercy only penetrates our lives if we learn to forgive. Forgiveness is at the heart of Christian prayer and holiness.

**161. What do we mean by the phrase, “Lead us not into temptation?”**

We are acknowledging our faith that God our Father will not leave us alone at the time of testing. Our prayer is that we will know how to understand the difference between a trial that helps us to grow in grace and a temptation that attempts to lead to sin and death, between being tempted and giving our consent to temptation. This petition unites us uniquely to Jesus, who overcame temptation by prayer and the Word of God (Luke 4:1-13).

**162. What is the concluding petition of the Lord’s Prayer?**

The final petition of the Lord’s Prayer is “Deliver us from the evil one.” The Evil One suggests the person of Satan who “leads the world astray” (Revelation 12:9) and “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

**163. What is the meaning of the doxology that concludes the Lord’s Prayer?**

Doxology means to offer praise to God. The doxology at the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever,” is not included as frequently in recent translations of the Bible which reflect the most original manuscripts. Nevertheless, it continues to be a fitting benediction of praise and expectation for all of Christ’s people in corporate worship settings and private devotion, among all ethnicities and in every language where Jesus Christ is known. It acknowledges that Christ’s victory is complete since God has “placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church” (Ephesians 1:22). Thus, the church can pray, in all times and all places:

*“For yours is the kingdom  
and the power  
and the glory forever. Amen.”*



***Our prayer is that God will unite our will to that of His Son.***