



OUR BELIEFS

First Christian Church is an independent non-denominational church involved in the Restoration Movement that shares commonality with Christian Churches throughout the country.

We seek unity of understanding in the essentials of our faith, but on many issues we have the freedom to disagree. We do ask, however, that all participating members of First Christian respect the following beliefs and that leaders and teachers resist any temptation to use their position as a forum from which to teach other views. Unity in the body depends upon harmony and mutual trust.

- In essential beliefs - we have unity.
- In non-essential beliefs - we have liberty.
- In all our beliefs - we will show charity (love).

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE

- We believe in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe God is the Creator of all things.
- We believe Jesus is God's only Son, Savior of the world and Lord of all.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, who encourages, guides, comforts, and transforms believers, drawing us closer to the ways of Christ.
- We believe the Bible is the inspired written Word of God and the authority and rule for all matters of faith and practice.
- We believe that man, created by God, willfully sinned and, as a result, is lost and hopeless apart from Jesus Christ.
- We believe that salvation—the forgiveness of sins—comes by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is offered to everyone.
- We believe that the church is the body and bride of Christ, was founded on the day of Pentecost, and consists of all Christians everywhere.
- We believe that death seals the eternal destiny of each person. When Christ returns, He will pronounce the eternal fate of every person, both living and dead: the saved - eternal life; the unsaved - eternal separation from God.

BECOMING A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PROBLEM:

Man has a natural desire to _____CONTROL_____ and to ignore God's principles for living.

This is because by nature we are _____SELF-CENTERED_____.

The Bible calls this attitude _____SIN_____.

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (John 1:8).

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

SOLUTION:

Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!" (John 14:6)

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person. Christianity is not about religion—it is a RELATIONSHIP.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

ACCEPTING THE SOLUTION:

- God expects us to ___**REPENT**_____. This literally means to "turn around." In other words, I'm choosing to make every effort and activity of my life now focused toward God instead of away from God.
- God expects us to _____**CONFESS**_____.
- Christ commands us to be _____**BAPTIZED**_____.
- We should live a _____**CHRIST-LIKE**_____ life.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

Baptism illustrates Christ's _____ **DEATH** _____, burial, and Resurrection.

"...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Baptism illustrates my _____ **NEW LIFE** _____ as a Christian.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

Every baptism _____ **IN THE BIBLE** _____ was by immersion.

Example: "'Look! Here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water... [the eunuch] went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39).

The Greek word "baptizo" means _____ **DIP OR PLUNGE** _____ under water.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who has _____ **BELIEVED** _____ in Christ.

"Those who accepted his message were baptized..." (Acts 2:41)

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News . . . and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized..." (Acts 8:12-13)

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as you have believed.

"And those who believed . . . were baptized . . . that day!" (Acts 2:41)

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?'" (Acts 8:35-38)

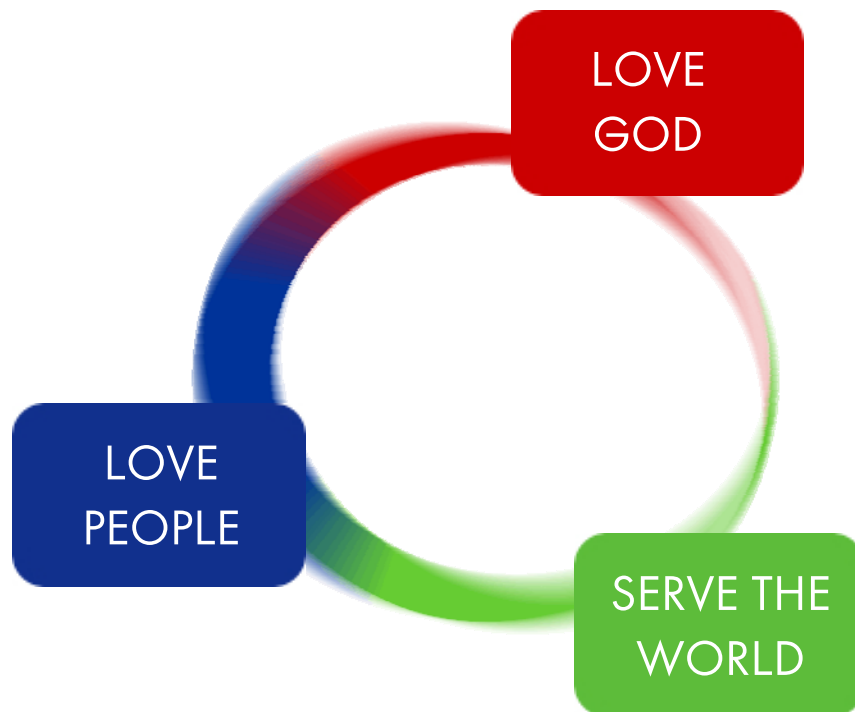
There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you're waiting until you are "perfect" to be baptized, rest assured you will never feel "good enough."

OUR PURPOSE:

To _____ **LEAD PEOPLE** _____ closer to _____ **JESUS CHRIST** _____.

Jesus came to seek and save lost people. We are compelled to do the same. But Jesus went beyond rescuing people from hell; He wanted to make them fit for Heaven. Our desire is that people not only meet Jesus Christ and receive Him as their Savior, but also grow in their faith and relationship with Him so they live obediently to His commands and become conformed to His character. No matter who you are or where you are in life, you can always take another step closer to Jesus.

OUR PROCESS:



A SIMPLE PROCESS TO EXPLAIN:

LOVE GOD

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).

We are compelled to become people who are passionately in love with God. Through the study of the Bible and time spent in worship and prayer, the truth of our Creator causes us to grow more and more in love with Him.

LOVE PEOPLE

"And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

Christ also calls us into authentic relationships with each other. Unlike the ways of the world that call for selfishness and pride, the commands of God call for us to lean on and learn from each other.

SERVE THE WORLD

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

To follow the example and teachings of Christ is to live generously. We have not only been called to Love God and Love People, but also to meet the needs inside and outside the walls of the church. We are to be servants!

A SIMPLE PROCESS IN ACTION:

LOVE GOD

CHILDREN

Sunday morning – 9:00/10:15 a.m.

Nursery (Birth-23 months)

A well-staffed and secure nursery is offered during our morning worship services to provide nurturing care and love for infants and toddlers. Volunteers have the opportunity to share God's love by caring for these precious little ones.

Downtown (2-4 years)

Each class is age-specific and staffed by volunteer teachers. They teach children about the love of God using basic Bible stories that illustrate His love for us and His desire to have a relationship with us.

Crosstown (Kindergarten-5th Grade)

With interactive times of singing and learning, these children take a further step towards learning about the love of God. Crosstown begins with a high-energy experience of worship and fun. We then move into age and gender-specific small groups that discuss important themes from scripture.

STUDENTS (Middle School and High School)

Sunday School (9 a.m.)

Individual classes exist for 6th grade, middle school girls and middle school boys, and high school students. Through creative teaching methods, these gatherings emphasize education about the grace-filled relationship that God longs to have with our students.

Worship Service (10:15 a.m.)

Our middle school and high school students attend our 10:15 service where they participate in worship through singing and communion. The messages that occur within our worship services are not beyond the understanding of our students, and they give them a further opportunity to learn about the love of God.

College (Worship Sunday 9 a.m.)

ADULTS

Worship Service (9:00/10:15 a.m.)

Growth University is a collection of elective courses and studies with a full range of depth to educate adults and help them apply the love of God to their own lives. Courses and studies happen at various times throughout the week and are also available to our Life Groups.

LOVE PEOPLE

CHILDREN

Sunday evening - 6:00 p.m.

Jamtown (Preschool-5th grade)

Age-specific youth groups are provided for children to grow in their relationship with other children. Bible themes are taught during this time, but an emphasis is put on teamwork and relationships.

STUDENTS

Sunday evening - 6:00 p.m.

Middle school and high school youth group

Filled with fun activities and competitions, this gathering is a great place for guests to get to know some new friends here at First Christian. The emphasis of this time is to grow in loving friendships with other students.

College Life Group

Sunday morning - 10:15 a.m.

Focusing on different themes of study, college-age students gather to lean on and encourage each other. This Life Group helps students navigate a transitional period in their lives.

ADULTS

Sunday morning - 9:00/10:15 a.m. and weeknights

Some people's schedules lead them to prefer a traditional "Sunday School" style Life Group. Other people prefer midweek gatherings of friends. Whether we meet Sunday morning or during the week, the purpose of these Life Groups is the same: to grow in friendships and learn to love people with the love of God.

SERVE THE WORLD

CHILDREN

Periodic Service Projects

Information about these opportunities is given during regular Love God and Love People programming.

STUDENTS

Service Night - Wednesday evening - 6:30 p.m.

As middle school and high school students participate in service opportunities around the community, they learn to recognize to the needs in the world around them.

Periodic Mission Trips

Students are also invited to participate in short-term trips inside and outside the U.S.

ADULTS

Outreach Events (service projects and mission trips)

On-Campus Ministry (organized through ministry teams and Life Groups)

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

_____ELDERS_____:

They provide direction and oversight to the life and ministry of First Christian, keeping us on target with God's Word and our objective: to lead people closer to Jesus Christ by loving God, loving people, and serving the world. Our Elders help us be all we can be for the glory of Christ, accomplishing God's will for the church today.

Those eligible to serve must be mature men continually growing in their faith. They must be Christ-like in terms of their character and lifestyle; they must be full of the Holy Spirit; they must be devoted to prayer; and they must be people of vision and faith when it comes to the church and the advancement of God's Kingdom. (Acts 20:28; Galatians 5:22, 23; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4)

DEACONS:

The word "deacon" in scripture literally means _____SERVANT_____. These men function as leaders, helpers, and workers in specific ministry fields that match their gifts and passions. Their involvement is essential to the church body because it allows the Elders to focus their energies on the ministry of the Word and prayer, meeting the spiritual needs of the flock. (Acts 6:1-6; Galatians 5:22, 23; I Timothy 3:8-13)

MINISTERS:

Our ministers are qualified leaders who have a heart for God and ministry. They are highly-educated, and they seek to function as a team in which each ministry area effectively contributes to the whole. Along with being accountable to the congregation, our ministers are accountable to the eldership and to one another on a continual basis.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER?

If you desire to become a part of the First Christian Church family, the most important characteristic we challenge you to embrace is _____COMMITMENT_____.

Unfortunately, we live in a society where very few want to be committed to anything—a job, a marriage, our country. Church membership is a practical expression of commitment. Committing to church membership swims against the current of American pop culture and "consumer religion." But the New Testament emphasizes the need for Christians to be accountable to each other in terms of spiritual growth. You can't be accountable without commitment to a church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At First Christian, we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. To be a member at First Christian you must BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world, REPENT of your sin and surrender to His Lordship, CONFESS your faith in Christ before others, FOLLOW Christ in Christian baptism (immersion), and CONTINUE to grow in faithful discipleship as a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- By acting in love toward other members.
- By following the leaders.
- By embracing our purpose of leading people closer to Jesus.
- By seeking to love God, love people, and serve the world.

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- By praying for its health.
- By inviting people to attend.
- By warmly welcoming our guests.
- By sharing the Good News of Christ with my friends.

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- By discovering my gifts and passions.
- By developing a servant's heart.

Until you serve here, you will _____NEVER_____ feel like this is your church.

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE VISION OF MY CHURCH

- By attending faithfully.
- By giving regularly.

Our mission is to lead people closer to Jesus Christ
by loving God, loving people, and serving the world.

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