

willow

Core Beliefs

Willow Creek's core beliefs describe key aspects of our faith. While these statements are not exhaustive, these statements represent our beliefs that serve as foundational guideposts for all we do at Willow Creek.

We aim to be a church unified in belief that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. In essential beliefs we will have unity, in non-essentials, liberty, and in all things, love.

THE BIBLE

The sole basis of our central beliefs is the Bible—the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe Scripture in its entirety originated with God and He revealed it to chosen authors. Scripture speaks with the authority of God while simultaneously reflecting the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of these human authors. We hold the Bible to be completely trustworthy. We believe the Bible is relevant and applicable to our contemporary lives, and useful for teaching, correcting, and guiding every area of life.

(Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

THE TRINITY

We believe in God who eternally exists as one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 5:48; Matthew 28:19)

GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father has existed eternally and is the author of time and creation. God demonstrated His power, wisdom, and goodness by creating the world and everything in it. Through His divine power and



providence, God continues to sustain His creation, operating within history to fulfill His redemptive purposes. Throughout history, He has expressed his desire to be our God and have a personal, eternal relationship with us. God the Father gave His one and only Son as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins and, by His power, resurrected Him from the dead.

JESUS

We believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who existed before creation and of whom prophets foretold. The full power of God was fully united with human nature by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Being both fully God and fully human, Jesus experienced the temptations and struggles of mankind and yet lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to God the Father. He voluntarily paid the price for the sins of all people by dying on the cross in their place, paying the full price for the sins of mankind, bringing salvation to all who trust in Him alone. After His physical death, Jesus literally rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father as the only intercessor between God and humans. We believe that Jesus will return again someday to earth to reign as King.

(Matthew 1:20; John 1:1-4, 14; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The third person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit exists eternally and dwells in every Christ-follower. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and Counselor, and as such, the Holy Spirit guides Christ-followers in understanding God's words and ways and empowers them to live lives that become increasingly like Jesus. The Holy Spirit also equips Christ-followers with talents and abilities for the purpose of the building up of God's Kingdom.

(John 14:15-18; John 16:13; Acts 1:8; John 16:7-8)



HUMANITY, SIN, AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

God created all people in His own image. As such, all people are created with innate value, worth, and dignity. However, the first man and woman were deceived by Satan and chose willful disobedience to God (sin). Their sin placed separation between them and God, and infected all of mankind with a sinful nature. All people have sinned and cannot measure up to God's standards on their own—all people are in need of redemption available only through the saving grace of God Himself. Each person can receive salvation and new life through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. God's Word assures individuals that He will continue His saving work in them forever. Through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

We demonstrate our faith in Jesus and our surrender to His leadership over our lives through the act of repentance and the public act of Baptism.

(Genesis 1, Genesis 3, Psalm 139, John 5:28-29, Romans 3:23, 6:23; 5:1, 5:8, 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

When we place our faith in Jesus, receiving salvation available through Him alone, our relationship with God is fully changed and we are given new life, empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Our life is continuously being transformed and renewed as we take next steps with God, spending time in prayer and reading His Word (the Bible), engaging in community with His people (the Church), and becoming more like Jesus in thought, speech, and action as we aim to demonstrate His love and goodness to the world around us. This process of spiritual development motivates us to seek ways to serve God and prepares us to spend eternity with Him.

(Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:3-5a, Ephesians 1:13, 2 Timothy 2:21)



THE CHURCH

The Church is the community of Christ followers that exists throughout the world. While there are many local expressions of the Church, there is One Church with One Head: Christ Himself. The Church is established by Jesus to serve one another, hold one another accountable to the faithful worship of God and growing together in Christ-likeness, and actively serving the world in practical ways to meet needs, bring hope, healing, and sharing the good news of Jesus. Every Christ follower is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit with gifts and skills to serve and support the Church. Christ followers regularly gather together to encourage one another through teaching, connection, prayer and communion.

(Matthew 16:18; Romans 12: 4-5; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Acts 2:42-47; 14:23; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

COMMUNION AND BAPTISM

We believe Baptism and Communion are two sacred practices of the local church. Baptism is the public demonstration of an individual making a personal decision to place their faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as modeled by Jesus Himself. Communion is a time for Christ followers to share the symbolic meal elements of bread and juice as an act of worship to remember the sacrifice made by Jesus that reconciled us to Himself.

(John 13; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

HUMAN DESTINY & ETERNITY

The sin of the first man and woman brought death into the world. Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. Apart from faith in Christ, people will suffer eternally separated from God in a literal place called Hell. We believe that God grieves this separation and desires for all people to accept salvation available through Jesus alone. Those who have placed their faith in Christ have been



declared righteous in the eyes of God and will experience eternal life in His presence in Heaven.

(Matthew 25:46, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22)

