

THE **LOCAL** CHURCH

WHAT WE BELIEVE

At The Local Church our beliefs are core to how we live. It is therefore important for each of us to recognise, learn and obey the historical truths the Christian church has been built upon. This task is vital to being faithful to Christ and obedient to his teaching as outlined in his great commissioning of the first disciples (Matthew 28:16-20).

You'll come to see that the Bible is central to those beliefs and practices, something passed down to us both through our denomination (The Christian Reformed Church of Australia) as well as by many protestant churches throughout history.

Our denomination originates from the time of the protestant reformation of the 16th century, which was founded on the principle that the Bible is the only ultimate source of Christian belief. As such, we seek to ground everything we believe and do on the Bible.

If you want to find out more about our denomination and our beliefs we would love to invite you to our Membership Course, which allows you to ask questions, as well as hear why we affirm the Creeds and Confessions of the ancient church (you can read about some of them here if you're interested- <http://crca.org.au/about-the-crca/beliefs>).

We are a community of fallen people who humbly sit under God's word- the Bible- to learn of his plan for humanity. We try to live out our faith from a place of freedom, rather than religious duty, based on the following values.

In this way we hope to be a church who aren't just 'hearers of the word, but doers as well' (James 1:22). You'll see that each of our values emerges directly out of God's story found in the Bible.

OUR VALUES

1. JESUS MATTERS

Jesus is the centre. Jesus is the hero of our story and the highest authority over our church. Our gatherings focus on Jesus. He is the means by which all things are redeemed. Everything we do is ultimately about Him.

LUKE 24:27, HEBREWS 12:1-2, COLOSSIANS 1:18-20, COLOSSIANS 3:17

2. PRAYER MATTERS

Prayer empowers everything that matters. We watch for and ask the Holy Spirit to be involved in the mundane and the major aspects of everyday life. We don't just promise to pray for others, we stop and pray.

The Holy Spirit, through prayer, leads our plans, not the other way around.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6, JOHN 16:13, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-19

3. GOD'S WORD MATTERS

We enjoy and submit to God's word. God's word is powerful, beautiful, and essential. The believer needs the word in their everyday discipleship. We call people to experience the joys of obeying God's commands. We train our members in seeing the overarching narratives and themes of the Bible. We hear the word, pray the word, and sing the word.

ACTS 6:4, HEBREWS 4:12; 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

4. COMMUNITY MATTERS

Real community is essential, beautiful, and requires hard work. A flourishing Christian has a vibrant relationship with God, self, believers, and outsiders. We keep short accounts and talk to people, not about them. We strive for peace and press in when things are hard.

ACTS 2:42-47, ROMANS 12:9-13, GALATIANS 6:2

5. OWNERSHIP MATTERS

We are contributors, not consumers. We equip members of all ages to make disciples in the everyday stuff of life. The Church is not a provider of services but a training ground for servants. Every member is a minister, every staff person and elder is an equipper. We give what we have and work towards solutions. We participate in spiritual disciplines and take responsibility for our own discipleship.

ROMANS 12:6, COLOSSIANS 3:23-24, EPHESIANS 4:11-12

6. EVANGELISM MATTERS

We are eager to see all people know the love of God. We ourselves have been adopted into God's family, and now we all play a role in others experiencing God's love and forgiveness. Theology is inherently evangelical, and evangelism is always theological. Personal relationships connect people to Jesus. Our everyday lives are our mission field.

1 PETER 3:15, LUKE 19:10, ROMANS 10:17, LUKE 15

7. JUSTICE MATTERS

We give voice and resources to those who suffer from injustice. We leverage our influence and resources to help those who lack the power or platform. We equip and train families in their pursuit of true religion, which includes serving the orphans, widows and others society often forgets about. We desire to use our lives as a reflection of God's love through serving the poor, outsiders, slaves, and fatherless.

GALATIANS 3:28, JAMES 2:9, ACTS 10:34-35

8. UNITY MATTERS

We are better together. There is one Church, under one Lord, called to one mission together. We value diverse and intergenerational discipleship. We embrace those with different gifts, colour, age, economic status, and experiences. We integrate, not assimilate. We strive for gift-based, shared leadership that is submitted to one another.

ROMANS 15:5-7, ROMANS 12:4-5, PHILIPPIANS 2:2, JOHN 17:20-21

9. SHEPHERDING MATTERS

We care for our members. We are committed to helping every man, woman, and child understand how their story has shaped them, and how God's story is redeeming them. We walk in patient love with each other in and through brokenness. We proactively move towards relationships and environments of care.

JEREMIAH 2:13, COLOSSIANS 1:27-28, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14, PSALM 34:18

10. CREATIVITY MATTERS

We have the courage to create. We are all made in the image of a creative God. We explore fresh ways to talk about and respond to the unchanging Gospel. We try new things. Innovation is beneficial to our mission and our own discipleship. Art powerfully inspires our faith and articulates our struggles. Creativity is an important part of the church.

EXODUS 35:30-35, COLOSSIANS 3:16-18, PSALM 96:1-6