

A Few of our Core Beliefs (speed-run) [5/1/24]

What people believe is less important than how they live. We aim to embody Love at all times. Here are 10 reasons why...

1. First and foremost, we are believers.

Life in this world is precious and fleeting. We think there is more to it than meets the eye.

2. We believe in God.

God is Love. Love is the Source and Center of everything.

3. We believe in The Big Truth.

In the sweet by-and-by, we'll all realize God is bigger and gooder than we've been taught. We're living that way now.

4. We believe in the practice of True Religion.

The most spiritual thing anyone can do is see their fellow human beings and respond compassionately.

5. We believe in the power of Faith Traditions.

No religion has a corner on the market of Truth. All religions can teach us about Love.

6. We believe in the Person of Christ.

Christ's Person (aka Love in human form) is more central to our beliefs than the tenets of traditional Christianity.

7. We don't believe in Hell.

Love would never eternally punish what It could easily heal. There's simply no way (in Hell?) such a doctrine can be true.

8. We don't consider the Bible the sum of all truth.

The Bible and other sacred texts are useful, but only insofar as they provoke us to Love, Dignity, and Wisdom. The rest is superfluous.

9. We acknowledge the humanness of Human Sexuality.

Sex and sexuality are complex. God sees and accepts each of us for the beautifully messy sexual creatures we are.

10. We don't need church buildings to live as Christians.

"Going to a church" is not the measure of authentic "Christian" living. It's okay to create community everywhere.

A Few of our Core Beliefs (scenic route)

We've jettisoned our narrow spiritual certainty for the sake of enlarged human sympathy. What follows are 10 of our core beliefs. We have no interest in defending them, and we don't necessarily intend on teaching them, but the ministry we do provide is "seated" in these ideas. Our goal is to be an ongoing embodiment of Love toward all.

1. First and foremost, we are believers.

The notion of a mindless, meaningless Universe is undone by simple virtue of humanity's desire to engage with it mindfully and meaningfully. We are each in and of the Cosmos, arbiters and articulators of its mind and meaning, conscious contributors to its trajectile continuation.

2. We believe in God...

..as the sans-cosmic, trans-cosmic Word, Mind, Order, Source, and Origin of all things...as the Power/Being/Reality most accurately understood, expressed, and experienced as Love.

3. We believe in The Big Truth...

...in the unifying Essence of Life and Existence.

...in a Cosmic Mystery not unknowable, but infinitely knowable.

...that what is ultimately True about God has been known by all people in every place at every time.

...that the whole of humanity is moving toward The Omega View, that is, the fullness of Understanding all will possess in the blessed There and Then...

...a Truth we intuitively yearn to engage, experience, and embody in the chaotic Here and Now.

4. We believe in the practice of True Religion...

...that sincere spirituality begins with sympathetic recognition of shared human frailty and joint human suffering...

...that it blossoms by the humble exploration and thoughtful articulation of common spiritual Knowing...

...that it matures through empathetic sight and compassionate action toward those who suffer as well as The Suffering.

5. We believe in the revelatory power of Religion...

....that an openness to Transcendence is essential for engaging fully and properly with Reality.

...that the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities are ever-evolving interpolations of our ever-unfolding Cosmic worldview.

...that all religions (past and present) are helpful in revealing The Big Truth...

...but only when their privatized claims of salvific exclusivity are not taken literally.

We stipulate no single religion can lay sole claim to The Big Truth.

We recognize, respect, and rely on the power of other faith traditions in empowering True Religion and pointing people toward The Omega View.

6. We believe in the Person of Christ...

...as an Incarnation of God/Love, central (though not exclusive) to our grasp and articulation of The Big Truth.

...that the Christ mythos (as eternal, divine, cosmic, human, loving, suffering, resurrected, universal) is a useful, primary Lens through which to express and experience God/Love in the world.

We boldly embrace many of the Church's core histories regarding Christ's transcendence, including his life, teaching, ministry and miracles, suffering, death, resurrection, and continuing revelation.

We reject any framing of those histories as a system of weaponized, conditional, us/them, contra-Christ religion.

The Largeness and Mystery of Christ's Person is best understood as declarational, not transactional.

Our proclamation is Christ's Person reveals both the all-suffering God and an example of what it means to be fully human.

7. We don't believe in Hell.

No one needs to be "saved" from God's Eternal Wrath and Punishment. Love is too powerful to individually penalize humanity's shared "sin sickness."

We don't think "Hell" exists, but if it does, we don't believe anyone goes there when they die.

If people do go to "Hell" in the afterlife, it's certainly not because of the religion they did or didn't belong to.

Such doctrines ignore the fundamental injustice of proximity as it relates to hearing and responding to the traditional "Gospel."

The teachings of Christ imply some may go to “Hell” on account of their failure to take notice of and act compassionately toward their fellow human beings...

But even in such cases, a person’s refusal to notice and respond to suffering is an obvious symptom of spiritual blindness and soul darkness...

...a "sickness" it seems unlikely the Great Physician would rather punish than heal.

So no, we don’t believe in Hell.

8. We don’t believe in the Preeminence of Scripture...

...but in God/Christ/Love as The Living Word, revealed and revealing before, through, and beyond the written texts.

We don’t expect the scriptures or sacred writings of any religion to entirely convey/contain The Big Truth.

We look to the Living God (in whose image all are made) to illuminate, filter, clarify, contextualize, and (as appropriate) repudiate the scriptures and sacred writings.

We are guided first and foremost by our empathetic imagination and experience, endeavoring at all times to see self in the other, the other in self, and God/Love in all.

We seek to incorporate the legacies of our joint/several religious writings into our ongoing discovery of the natural world...

...as we interpret and apply the texts afresh in shaping our ever-enlarging spiritual worldview.

9. We acknowledge the complexity of Human Sexuality.

We believe children and vulnerable persons are to be protected at all times and at all costs.

We affirm sex and sexuality are central to the human condition and experience, and as such, they are sacred and holy.

We believe each person's sexual self-concept is nuanced and multiplex, seeded and shaped by forces at once psychological, biological, pathological, sociological, and experiential.

We reject the notion that hetero, married, and/or monogamous are the default and/or ideal expressions of sexuality.

We affirm the earthly splendor and heavenly qualification of all S/LGBTQIA+ persons.

We assert God never has and never will reject or punish anyone for their sexuality or sexual self-concept.

We assert Dignity (self & others') and Consent (conditioned & qualified) are the foundation of the Christ-aligned sexual ethic...

...and that individual and cultural norms of sexual Desire, Pleasure, and Expression ought to be ever-aligning therewith.

We affirm masturbation (solo-sex) as an acceptable, blessed, and shame-free expression of sexual Desire and Pleasure.

We affirm the Dignity of sex workers as well as the policies & practices necessary for non-exploitive sex work regardless of socio-economic, cultural, and circumstantial drivers.

We believe children and vulnerable persons are to be protected at all times and at all costs.

10. We believe Community can thrive outside the Church.

An enlarged view of God demands a fresh estimation of the Person of Christ. Everything we understand about being a "Christian" must flow from there.

When our religious worldview was built around "conditional salvation through Christian faith," it was logical to channel our time and resources into institutions dedicated to that end.

But once the injustice of the "transactional view" dawns upon us, it can become a struggle to continue pouring our religious energies into entities with which we feel principally mis-aligned.

Though our cultural roots and nostalgic affections may forever rest in the traditional church, there often emerges a keen awareness within our souls that something has to give.

It is this "breaking" that often unsettles our connection to traditional institutions, and while we dare not deny the enduring power of our mystical experience within the traditional church...

...we may find ourselves unable to abide the weaponized framing of those experiences in a manner that discounts the Largeness of God we now glimpse and demeans the humanity of those who believe otherwise.

It feels foolish to resent the church itself, for its members and leaders are merely heirs of the conditional Christ worldview, not its inventors. So what then? Abandonment, disenfranchisement, isolation? No. A new vision of Community must arise.

Our goal at The Church of _____ is to teach for the enrichment of people's lives, to expound upon the fulness of what it means to be human, and to present a wider Lens through which people can view themselves and their place in the world.

We aim to embolden people to express their Christ convictions anew through the simple act of LIVING CHARITABLY...

...free from the strain of religious (pre/dis)qualification.

We seek to encourage people to direct their religious energies and resources into affirming dignity and easing suffering on the micro and macro level...

...living as ongoing Incarnations of Christ in their families, as friends, as neighbors, and as awakened embodiments of Love within The Beloved Community.