

## The Apostle's Creed

*This is the basic creed of Reformed churches. It is called the "Apostle's Creed" because it dates from very early times in the Church, a half century or so from the last writings of the New Testament.*

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 \*; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church \*\*, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*\* Some ancient sources add, "he descended into hell," referring to his receiving of the outpouring of the full wrath of God for the sins of those from whom he was atoning.*

*\*\* The use of the term "catholic" is a reference to the "world wide / universal Church of the Lord Jesus Christ" and not to the Roman Catholic Church. It embraces the fact that the Church is not exclusive to a particular nation, tribe, race or tongue... but is for believers throughout the world. It is not a reference to any specific denomination. Also in the Nicene Creed.*

## The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic\*\* and apostolic\*\*\* Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*\*\*\* "Apostolic" refers to the fact that the church is devoted to the teaching of the prophets and apostles, which is the Holy Bible. It is not a reference to any specific denomination.*

## Ujima Christian Church

(Also known as "Ujima Village Christian Church")

### Statement of Faith

#### **From the Church Charter: ARTICLE III, "Statement of Faith"**

*Section One:* The Ujima Christian Church holds to the following orthodox evangelical confessional affirmations summarizing biblical doctrine;

- a. *As to the Authority of Scripture...* We confess that the Christian Bible, comprised of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, faithfully reflecting the autographa in any translation, is the Word of God and is the unique revelation of His divine character and will, is inerrant in all it addresses, and is the only infallible rule to which all doctrines must conform and to which we all must submit.
- b. *As to The Nature of God...* We confess that God is all He has revealed himself to be in scripture, which includes His being omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable and sovereign. God is

holy and loving, just and gracious, righteous and merciful, transcendent and immanent. The one true God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and these three divine persons are one being, of the same substance, co-eternal and co-equal. This biblically expressed triunity of the one true God, historically referred to as "The Trinity", is a mystery of faith not easily understood, but necessarily believed by all Christians.

- c. *As to The State of Unredeemed Humanity...* We confess that in Adam, all human beings fell and are naturally conceived and born sinful and are spiritually dead. We are naturally rebellious against God and, if left to our own sinful inclinations, will not truly seek Him, cannot be reconciled to Him, and cannot truly be called "His children".
- d. *As to The Process of Redemption...*
  - d.1. We confess that from eternity, God the Father, who is all holy, righteous, loving, and merciful, sovereignly determined to redeem a people for himself by providing an atoning sacrifice as a propitiation for their sins and to regenerate them to spiritual life for the praise of His own glory. This eternal plan of redemption was foretold in the Old Testament and made manifest in the New Testament.
  - d.2. We confess that Jesus Christ is God the Son incarnate, having two natures - divine and human - in one person, who lived a sinless life and offered Himself upon the cross as the divinely appointed atoning sacrifice saving those who have faith in him from divine condemnation and the eternal penalty of sin. As to his human nature, Jesus Christ was divinely conceived and born of the virgin Mary, died upon the cross, was physically resurrected, ascended into heaven and sits on the divine throne as Lord of all. In Him, believers have forgiveness and find saving grace, mercy, and access to God. Through Him, believers are given the right to be called "children of God".
  - d.3. We confess that God the Holy Spirit regenerates sinners by sovereign divine grace and awakens them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. This rebirth inclines their hearts toward the Lord Jesus Christ and produces conversion and spiritual growth, evidenced by the development of the characteristics of godliness, spiritual gifts, the assurance of salvation and divine adoption.
- e. *As to The Church...*
  - e.1. We confess that the true church victorious, called the "invisible church" and "body of Christ", is made up of God's covenant children in Christ who have been declared righteous by grace alone through faith alone throughout all time. Prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, true faith prefigured him, and since His incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension, true faith is in the biblical Gospel in its fullness. It is through this repentant saving faith that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by divine grace.
  - e.2. We confess that the church in this world, called the "visible church", is not limited to denomination, association or convention, and includes men, women, and children from all nations, languages, and cultures. It includes those who are in the "invisible church" who have true saving faith and those who are not because they do not have true saving faith; but those who have true faith will demonstrate the same through the evidence of an ever deepening Christ-likeness in their character, in addition to regular fellowship in worship, study, and service with the visible church. Those who have been saved by Christ will love His Church.
  - e.3. We confess that the church is called to glorify God alone in worship and ministry and to reflect His holiness and love, to proclaim the Gospel to all people - calling them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, to edify and strengthen believers in biblical discipleship, to rightly administer the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism as the sign and seal of the Gospel and New Covenant in Christ, to demonstrate its love of God and godly love for mankind through ministries of compassion extended to both believers and unbelievers.
  - e.4. We confess that as God has called His church to holiness, believers are granted increased strength through God the Holy Spirit to reflect the holiness of the Lord by praying that their

thoughts, words, and deeds might be pure before Him, and yet remaining ever mindful that the frailties of the faithful are covered by Christ's victory over sin and death and that only in His accomplished work do we place our trust. As believers are called to godly holiness, our relationships must bear the marks of trustworthiness, humility, temperance, charity and chastity. Such holiness must also be reflected in the ordinance of matrimony, which is to be held sacred and solely solemnized between a man and a woman in accordance with God's Holy Word.

f. *As to The Consummation...*

- f.1. We confess that the souls of believers who die are immediately in the conscious blissful presence of the Savior awaiting the promised consummation and resurrection of their bodies. At the appointed time, Jesus Christ shall physically return to judge the world, receiving by His seal of grace the faithful who died, and the faithful still living, to the resurrection unto glorification and eternal joy, and condemning disbelievers to the resurrection unto eternal damnation.
- f.2. We confess that the entire creation will be renewed unto glory in accordance with God's eternal decree and to His own delight, and that those, who by grace have placed their trust in Him, will delight in His presence eternally.

*Section Two:* The Ujima Christian Church affirms the following Classic Attributes Of Historic Christianity;

- a. *"The Church is One"*... This attribute refers to the unity of believers in Christ. Jesus prayed that we would be one as He and the Father are one. This is "unity" and not necessarily "uniformity". This oneness is marked by the godly love and mutual submission that Christians should exhibit toward one another in accordance with Scripture. This oneness cuts across denominational lines and is grounded in the unity of the Body of Christ, which includes all true believers. This oneness is also reflected in our being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. This oneness should be exhibited in our unified witness to salvation through Jesus Christ. This should also be demonstrated through each individual congregation's willingness to welcome believers from other Christian congregations to share in the Lord's Supper and accept the Trinitarian water Baptism of other Christian congregations, regardless of mode or age of application, while maintaining their own right of conscience in regard to the administration of the sacrament when performed in their own congregation. We are of one faith, one baptism, and have one Lord.
- b. *"The Church is Holy"*... Christ's holiness covers his church. The Church is called out from the world, but is in the world as a ministering witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church is commanded to reflect the holiness of God and enabled to do so through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. This holiness is reflected in the practice of piety, prayer, fervent worship, biblical stewardship, repentance and transformation through the submission to the Word of God. It is also marked through righteous relationships exhibiting humility, honesty, charity, chastity, and the holding of matrimony as sacred between a man and a woman. The holiness of God is borne witness in the church through its reverence for the holiness of God, through the practice of biblical servant leadership and through the shepherding care provided among believers and extended through ministries of compassion to the world.
- c. *"The Church is Catholic"*... True catholicity is not a denominational phenomenon. Rather, the catholicity of the church is reflected in its worldwide, cross-cultural nature. To be "catholic" infers an acceptance of the universal proclamation of the Gospel without regard to nationality, race, ethnicity or language. While there is an "exclusive" aspect to salvation in that one must have saving faith in Christ, there is also an "inclusive" aspect to the church in that the call to repent and believe is extended to every nation and tribe. Catholicity refers to a unity of faith, life, and ministry among believers across geographic, cultural, social, economic, and political lines professing the one true faith and oneness with one another in the faith. Catholicity acknowledges the fallenness of all human culture and lifts the "counter culture" of God's covenantal community in Christ above them all.
- d. *"The Church is Apostolic"*... Apostolicity is the characteristic of orthodoxy in that the church's teaching and practice wholly reflects, and is in submission to, the witness of the Prophets and

Apostles who were the human instruments used by the Holy Spirit to write scripture. Apostolicity is demonstrated in the church's adherence to the Bible. While, in this sense, the offices of "Prophet" and "Apostle" were ended with the completion of special revelation in the final writing of the Scripture, to an extent, the church continues a prophetic and apostolic ministry in its continuing proclamation of the biblical Word to the world and deeper discernment and application of that Word through the ongoing illumination provided by the Holy Spirit. The Church is "apostolic" in that it has been sent by Christ as a witness to the truth of the Gospel as revealed in scripture, bidding that all repent and believe. The "apostolic faith" is summarized in the ancient ecumenical creeds of biblical orthodoxy, including the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed.

*Section Three:* The Ujima Christian Church affirms that the following "Marks of the True Church" derived during the Protestant Reformation aid in discerning faithful assemblies from those fallen into grievous error and heresy

- a. *Where The Scriptures Are Rightly Interpreted, Taught And Proclaimed...* A true church is marked by a high view of the trustworthiness and overall unity of scripture reflected in doctrinal assertions wholly based upon the unique authority of the Bible as God's Holy Word. The Bible is expounded in preaching and its propositions interpreted and applied in order to inform, convict, correct, exhort, comfort, and inspire in accordance with the transforming truth and power of the Word of God. There is a determination to proclaim the "whole counsel of God" in preaching and not merely emphasizing that which is favorable to the congregation. The biblical proclamation "troubles the comfortable and comforts the troubled" with the Gospel. Preaching and teaching are done to glorify and please God and not satisfy and placate people or elevate the preacher or teacher. There is a devotion to discerning biblical orthodoxy and carrying out the same through orthopraxis. A passion for learning and applying God's word is encouraged in worship, prayer, study, fellowship, stewardship and service. New converts are initiated into an appreciation of scripture and disciples are edified and admonished by its verses.
- b. *Where The Sacraments Are Rightly Administered...*
  - b.1. The Sacraments are the sign and seal of the New Covenant in Christ and the Gospel of Grace. The Lord's Supper, established by Christ on the eve of his crucifixion, is conducted in public where both the consecrated bread and fruit of the vine is provided to God's repentant people as a sign of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The bread represents his body and the fruit of the vine represents his shed blood and finished work upon the cross, which was ordained by God's eternal plan of redemption as a propitiation for the sin of believers throughout all time. The sacrament also represents the oneness of the invisible church uniting in the Body of Christ. As creaturely symbols pointing to the grace of Christ, the elements are not to be adored or worshiped. The Lord's Supper is rightly celebrated corporately and should be accompanied by the preaching of the Word. Those invited to partake of the Lord's Supper must be challenged to examine themselves as to their saving faith in Christ, their true repentance and desire for divine forgiveness, their willingness to forgive those who have wronged them, their having been sealed through Baptism or their having a desire to be baptized, and their not currently being under censure by a rightly organized Christian Church.
  - b.2. Water Baptism is the seal of the New Covenant and the Gospel of Grace and is commanded by Christ. It symbolizes God's covenantal promise and typifies the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the covering of the one being baptized with the benefits of the covenant community. Like the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is a symbol of God's gracious initiative in redeeming His people through the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Baptism, water is blessed and used in a ritual washing, which may be administered through sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, while proclaiming the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit upon the one being ritually initiated into the covenant community, who shall be held accountable to the covenant and under the discipling care of the congregation. Baptism of believing converts and of infants being raised in believing households both have precedent in scripture and the history of the early church. While each congregation may discern which mode it should practice, and at what age it shall provide the sacrament, no church should reject the Trinitarian Water Baptism administered by another assembly of believers. To do so is to deny the character of the very covenant that it symbolizes.

- c. *Where There Is The Application Of Biblical Discipline...* The church is responsible for holding those under its care accountable to biblical doctrine and practice. While no church should impose its will upon any, the church is charged with admonishing those who have fallen into grievous sin, especially that which affects the spiritual well-being of others. The godly leadership of the church is charged with using compassionate counsel, prayers, and when necessary, censure from the Lord's Supper and the fellowship in a disciplinary attempt to restore the straying through such conviction and bring them to repentance and reconciliation. Such correction is to be administered prayerfully and patiently, realizing that all believers are still struggling with sin and that growth in grace is a life-long process. Such discipline is a witness to the lost and straying, an encouragement to the faithful, and protective for the flock. The church is also the judicial authority over disputes between believers. Those under the care of the congregation should seek the godly guidance of its leaders in settling disputes and their assistance in restoring righteous relationships through the practice of charity and mutual submission to the Word of God.

*Section Four:* The Ujima Christian Church embraces the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation together with the interpretive affirmations and denials adapted from the Cambridge Declaration of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals;

a. *Sola Scriptura - The Scriptures Alone...*

- a.1. Affirming the Christian Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments) to be the sole source of written divine revelation, inerrant in all it claims. That the Bible alone can bind the conscience. That the Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.
- a.2. Denying that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, and also deny that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

b. *Solus Christus - Christ Alone...*

- b.1. Affirming that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.
- b.2. Denying that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

c. *Sola Gratia – Grace Alone...*

- c.1. Affirming that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by His grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.
- c.2. Denying that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Repentant saving faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

d. *Sola Fide – Faith Alone...*

- d.1. Affirming that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.
- d.2. Denying that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a Christian Church that denies or condemns sola fide can still claim its doctrine to be consistent with the witness of Scripture.

e. *Soli Deo Gloria – Only To God Be Glory...*

- e.1. Affirming that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify Him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for His glory alone.
- e.2. Denying that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

*Section Five:* The Ujima Christian Church upholds Biblical Covenantal Theology expressed in the confessional statements of Reformed Christianity, namely: The Heidelberg Catechism; The Westminster Confession of Faith; The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

*Section Six:* The Ujima Christian Church affirms The Chicago Statement of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.

*Section Seven:* The Ujima Christian Church affirms in the sanctity of human life and the responsibility of people to be good stewards of God's creation.