



Winter 2009

# ESPECIAL WITNESSES

## The Seventy Newsletter

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### **First Presidency Releases Identity, Message, Mission Resource**

On January 26, 2009, the First Presidency released a new statement on the church's identity, message and mission titled *We Share: Identity, Message and Mission*. Many seventies have likely already seen this resource, but we want to present it again in this newsletter to ensure that all seventy have access to it.

"This document is the result of a collaborative effort among representatives of the worldwide church and church leaders," the First Presidency said. "The Expanded World Church Leadership Council, various World Church teams, the 2008 World Church Leaders Gathering, and many other individuals have contributed to its contents. *We Share: Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs* presents basic ideas and common terminology to align expressions of church identity, mission, message, and beliefs throughout the world."

They went on to say, "We expect this paper will play a major role in guiding the church in the years ahead. It provides a foundation on which we will build classes, sermons, ministry models, resources, small group activities, and worship experiences that speak to those we serve. It provides common threads to use to weave unique expressions of the vision and mission of the Community of Christ throughout the world."

This resource will be extremely important and helpful in our role as "especial witnesses." A plain text version of the document is presented at the end of this newsletter. However, a full color version, including pictures, can be found at [www.CofChrist.org/discernment/weshare/](http://www.CofChrist.org/discernment/weshare/).

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### ***One Seventy's Response to the Call to "Pursue Peace"***

by Connie Altman, Quorum One

Peace and justice, such a simple and quaint sounding idea. We were raised singing about it, talking about it, but very seldom living it. It seems so funny to me that I didn't really realize this for so many years. The peace seal of the church and the dream of Zion was what held me firm to the church all my life. I dreamed of living in Zion as a youth and was relieved when my Sunday school teacher told me that my town of Cameron, Missouri was "close enough" to Independence to be part of Zion and I wouldn't have to move. When I married my husband, Doug, in 1974, we moved to Ohio with the understanding that we would be moving back to "Zion" in a few years. As an adult, I have taught Young Peacemaker's Clubs and Conflict Resolution classes to my middle school students. I thought I knew all about peace and justice.

A few years ago, at a Reunion at Camp Bountiful in southern Ohio, Andrew Bolton taught a class on peace and justice. He recommended a book by Walter Wink entitled "The Powers That Be". All of a sudden, this idea began to take on a much broader meaning. I have come to believe that I cannot merely

give lip service to the idea, but that I have to live peace and justice every day. Since then, my husband, Doug and I have been on a journey. We have been reading many books and articles, watching documentaries, attending workshops - all to educate ourselves on injustices that are occurring in our world. Injustices with which we have been complicit because we have stood by in silence. Many times out of our ignorance, we have even contributed monetarily to these same injustices.

I believe it is my moral duty to educate myself as much as possible so that I may avoid being part of the problem and can work toward becoming part of the solution. We joined an international peace group called "The Fellowship of Reconciliation". It has been around since WWI and has had such members as Martin Luther King Jr., Walter Wink, and Gandhi. We formed a local group and have busied ourselves with study and working to inform our community about peace and justice issues. Each month we stand together in front of our local congresswoman's office to protest war and plea for peace. We write letters to the editor, to members of congress, and to the president.

These kinds of actions are very small perhaps, in the grand scheme of things. An action that is much bigger is that we have begun to change our own lives. We recycle, eat organic foods, have moved toward a vegetarian diet (but haven't gotten there completely yet), made cloth napkins to use instead of paper, wash dishes instead of using paper plates, bought Christmas gifts from fair trade stores (can be found at [www.greatergood.com](http://www.greatergood.com)), try to shop at stores that treat their employees well, etc. There are so many things to do. I am aware that we have a long way to go. There are many things that I do not know. There are also many things that I do know, but have not been willing to sacrifice enough to achieve. As I said, I am still on the journey.

If we want to live the kind of life Jesus lived and taught, we must study the Sermon on the Mount and adopt it into our everyday lives. This is not easy, but I do not believe it is impossible. It is the kind of life we must strive for if we are to live together in Zion.

"Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ's vision of the peaceable kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue Peace." D&C 163:3b

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## Q2 Seventies Join Other World Church Ministers in Field Gatherings

By Robin Linkhart (Field Missionary Coordinator), Quorum Two

Exploring the role of world church minister and the power of partnered ministry high priests, evangelists, and seventy gathered in Olathe, Kansas and Ft. Collins, Colorado for a weekend filled with worship, learning, sharing, and fellowship. Apostle Dale Luffman, Presiding Evangelist Dave Brock, President of the High Priest Quorum Jane Gardner, and Field Missionary Coordinator Robin Linkhart served on the team of presenters.

Each weekend gathering opened on Friday evening with a keynote from Apostle Luffman focused on the theme scripture found in Hebrews 12:1 "...surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..." as well as Luke's gospel call to incarnational witness. Dale challenged all to reflect on the questions, "How is Jesus' life of ministry confronting you today? How are you living out of that sense of liberation, and how are you sharing it?"



*Seventies Stephen Hatch and Don Welch visit with Ft. Collins, CO Pastor Sharon Troyer during one of the gatherings.*

Presiding Evangelist Dave Brock expanded on several key aspects important to being ministers of blessing. An evangelist provides presence and “comp-anioning” as spiritual com-panion, apostolic witness, teacher/learner, and pastoral presence. The evangelist is called to be vulnerable to a vulnerable God; to “be” sanctuary for “other.”

Jane Gardner presented on the office of high priest, who alongside evangelist and seventy, serve as World Church Ministers. Ministers of vision, high priests are called to be servant leaders. They are to stand in the breach between what is and what is yet to be, with humility and gentleness pulling people beyond assumed capabilities. She likened serving as high priest to geese flying in “V” formation, rotating lead position, spelling each other in support of mission.

Emphasizing priesthood partnering between offices and an integrated holistic approach to ministry, Robin Linkhart presented a review of the office of seventy grounded in Luke 10 and Christ’s call to mission which beckons *all* to be his witnesses, *proclaiming good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed* (Luke 4:18).

Small group break out sessions throughout the weekend provided opportunity for all to share in witness, reflections, discernment, and prayer. Seventy from Arizona, Midlands, Oklahoma, Rio Grande, and Rocky Mountain mission centers participated in the event urging fellow ministers to respond with renewed passion to the call to share Christ’s peace.

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## Remembering Our Past, Reimagining Our Future

by Kris Judd (Field Missionary Coordinator, President of Seventy), Quorum Two

“The Seventies Hall in Nauvoo will never be the same”. Those words were heard following a rousing, spirit filled service in mid September as Seventy, Evangelists and High Priests from the North Central USA field gathered together for a weekend of fellowship, worship and inspiration. The final service, held in the packed Seventies Hall capped off a weekend where we remembered our journey and envisioned the journey before us.

Eighty three Evangelists, High Priests, Seventy, Bishops and spouses from the Prairie Bluffs, Lamoni Heartland and Headwaters Mission Centers attended the event in Nauvoo. Many who were there fulfilled a lifetime dream of visiting this spiritual and historical site. Others returned to witness the transformation of buildings, Community of Christ visitor center and the town itself. We gathered together to learn of the ways ministry is being provided by fellow ministers in our respective offices around the world, as well as to begin to navigate new relationships as partners in the ministry of blessing, vision and mission. Time was spent in large group, small group and mission center meetings designed to go deeper in appreciation for what has been and imagination for what can be.

While Friday night was designed for socializing, and Saturday morning and evening focused on education and information, Saturday afternoon gave many the opportunity to tour the sites with Lach Mackay, who provided accurate and inspirational stories of our past. For many the tour was the highlight of the weekend.

On Sunday morning the group filled the Seventies hall, owned by the LDS church, a reproduction of the building where early Seventy had met, studied, worshipped and prepared for missions abroad. The building came alive with the sounds of contemporary praise music as well as traditional hymnody. Testimonies of God’s life changing power were shared, and Apostle Mary Jacks Dynes shared the movement of the spirit through the disciplines of solitude, community and then ministry, inspired by the writings of Henri Nouwen.

At one point in the service, one of the Mormon elders who had met us at the hall returned and joined our group. He looked somewhat uncomfortable with the praise music that was being sung and sat back quietly. The music being sung, however, was a combination of a contemporary song and *The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning* led by David Ettinger. Our Mormon friend joined in as we sang the traditional hymn, and halfway through the song began to look over the shoulder of the woman seated in front of him, trying to read the words to the contemporary verses added in. What once seemed uncomfortable now beckoned him to join in with the spirit of the service.

Truly, those who attended and who felt the impress of the Spirit reminding us of where we have come, and beckoning us on to fulfill God’s mission in partnership with one another will never be the same. As ministers of blessing, vision and mission in the North Central USA we are being called to work together in new ways, discerning God’s direction and activity in our field. May we honor the memory of the people who followed the leading of God’s spirit and created the City Beautiful beside the river so many years ago by following the same God who calls us to build God’s Kingdom where we live today.

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## Open Positions with Missionary Focus

The following positions are currently open (as of 2/3/09) and seeking applicants:

- **Children/Youth Missionary Specialist--Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA**
- **Church Planter--Anchorage, Alaska, USA**
- **Power House Minister--Baltimore, Maryland, USA**
- **Congregational Planter/Pastor--Southern California USA Mission Center**
- **Missionary Coordinator--Sierra Pacific USA Mission Center**

For additional information and application procedures please consult Community of Christ website and/or contact Kathy Marek, Human Resources, 1-800-825-2806, x3061.

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## Quorum Changes

### Newly Ordained Seventy

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following individuals who have been ordained since our last newsletter:

Faustin Charlestin	Port-au-Prince, (Haiti)
Wilner Deluxe	Port-au-Prince, (Haiti)
Elvince Dieujuste	Port-au-Prince, (Haiti)
Ode Flerida	Dominican Rep., (BWI)
Craig Hidy	Tennessee, (USA)
Jean Claude Pierre	Port-au-Prince, (Haiti)
Narcisse Pierre	Port-au-Prince, (Haiti)
Dee Robino	Oregon, (USA)
Jack Sanders	Florida, (USA)
Dia Sawyer	Arkansas, (USA)
Cathy Sheppard	Kentucky, (USA)
Jeff Stoker	Michigan, (USA)
Emmanuel Tshifunga	Kolwezi, (Congo DR)
Kenny Wilson	Missouri, (USA)

### New Ministry Opportunities

We would like to recognize with appreciation the years of ministry as seventy given by the following persons:

Craig Martens	Ohio, (USA)
Bob Riley	Texas, (USA)

### Expression of Support and Appreciation

We offer pastoral support to the family of Lee Bailey (Independence, Missouri, USA) and appreciation for his nearly 25 years of service as a seventy.

Lee Mace Bailey (September 11, 1935–November 21, 2008)

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# **We Share: Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs**

## **Introduction**

This document provides important information about the identity, mission, message, and beliefs of Community of Christ. The Expanded World Church Leadership Council, cultural interpreters, various World Church teams, the 2008 World Church Leaders Gathering, and other individuals contributed to its contents.

This document presents basic ideas and common terminology to be used to align expressions of church identity, mission, message, and beliefs throughout the world. This material will be translated into age-appropriate and culturally suitable language. This material will be used as foundational information for:

- Mission alignment and implementation
- Integrated communications
- Resources to support lifelong discipleship formation
- Principles and guidelines for priesthood faithfulness
- Worship ministries
- Creation of hymnals, hymns, and songs
- Temple ministries
- Teaching and preaching ministries
- Guidelines on conditions of membership
- Guidelines for culturally suitable standards of conduct
- Statements on various ethical issues

We have shaped the English text using StyleWriter, a computer program that clarifies our wording to be as accessible as possible to translators and non-English speakers, targeting jargon, passive voice, vague words, and complex sentences. StyleWriter does not recommend some words and phrases that are familiar to those in the English-speaking church.

## **We Share...**

The phrase “we share” is used in headings throughout this document. This phrase has two important meanings:

1. What we share with one another, as members and participants in Community of Christ shapes identity, mission, message, and beliefs as a worldwide faith community.
2. Just as important, the phrase “we share” emphasizes our call and commitment to share our witness, ministries, sacraments, resources, and message with the world.

So, the phrase “we share” defines both what we generally hold in common and what we generously offer to the world.

## **We Share a Vision of Creation**

The vision we share is God’s vision of reconciliation, salvation, wholeness, justice, and peace expressed in the scriptural definition of shalom. Shalom means a fullness or completeness of peace. God yearns to establish a lasting covenant of peace with humankind and with all of creation.

*The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them...They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

—Isaiah 11:6-9 NRSV

God's vision of peace for creation clearly was revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed the coming kingdom or peaceful reign of God on earth. The gospel or "good news" was then entrusted to the church—the community of disciples called to be the body of Christ. The purpose of the church is to form disciples who faithfully share the gospel of peace in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us...So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;...*

—Ephesians 2:13,17 NRSV

The Christian cross and the church seal symbolize and emphasize our commitment to God's vision of justice and peace for the entire creation. This vision was proclaimed consistently by the prophets and decisively revealed in Jesus Christ, who calls disciples in every age to share his peace throughout the world.

## We Share a Name

We are Community of Christ! We share a common name throughout the world that is translated into many languages. Our name is faithful to our heritage and true to our identity and calling today.

*"Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

## We Share a Future

We also are continuing to become "Community of Christ!" Our future is full of possibility, necessary challenges, and hope as we continue to respond to the guidance of God, who has led the church from its beginning.

*"Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

## We Share the Peace of Jesus Christ

Early in its history, the church, often referred to as the restoration movement, perceived the call to share the fullness of the gospel throughout the world (Doctrine and Covenants 1:4) and to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (Doctrine and Covenants 6:3). Today, we

understand this as the call to share the peace of Jesus Christ in all of its personal, interpersonal, community, and worldwide dimensions.

Sharing the peace of Jesus Christ involves generously and compassionately offering witness, ministry, sacraments, and community life that reconciles and restores people to right or righteous relationships with God, themselves, others, and creation. This wholistic approach to proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel is faithful to our best understanding of God's will. This approach is the fullest meaning of "restoration."

*For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.* —Isaiah 54:10 NRSV

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. —John 14:27 NRSV

*And whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.*  
—1 Nephi 3:189

*For he (Jesus Christ) is our peace, in his flesh he made both groups into one, and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility...So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;...—Ephesians 2:14,17 NRSV*

*Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God's peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.*

*Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community. The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.*  
—Doctrine and Covenants 163:2

## We Share a Mission

How do we share the peace of Jesus Christ in all of its personal, interpersonal, and worldwide dimensions? The church's mission statement points the way.

*We Proclaim Jesus Christ and Promote Communities of Joy, Hope, Love, and Peace.*  
—World Church Mission Statement

## We proclaim Jesus Christ!

We proclaim Jesus Christ through local and worldwide evangelism, including ministries of invitation, witness, inclusive fellowship, worship, caring, and lifelong disciple formation.

## We Promote Communities!

We promote local and worldwide communities that signal (exemplify, reveal) the peaceful reign of God on earth. In some areas of the world this is known as the cause or hope of Zion.

When we effectively proclaim Jesus Christ by sharing our witness, ministries, and sacraments, and promote Christ-centered communities of justice and peacefulness, we are sharing the peace of Jesus Christ.

*And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; —1 Nephi 3:187*

## We Share a Sacred Story

*Do not fail to listen attentively to the telling of the sacred story, for the story of scripture and faith empowers and illuminates.—Doctrine and Covenants 161:5*

The story of Community of Christ is part of a much larger sacred story that is rooted in Christian history, including the Hebrew tradition from which Christianity emerged. Within this larger history, Community of Christ has a particular story that is inspiring, colorful, and increasingly international. The church began in the early 1800s in upper New York, USA, during a time of Christian revival. So far, the church has established a presence in close to fifty nations.

The story of the church is one of unusual faith, vision, and creativity in response to God's call. We can clearly see God's Spirit active in every chapter of our faith story. What began with a teenager seeking God in prayer in the early 1800s continues today. God gives each generation insights, experiences, and challenges for divine purposes.

The Presidency has provided a set of "Church History Principles" to help guide the church's continued exploration of its history. These principles have been taken from the insights of past and present World Church leaders, church historians, theologians, and others.

## Church History Principles

1. Continuing exploration of our history is part of identity formation.
2. History informs but does not dictate our faith and beliefs.
3. The church encourages honest, responsible historical scholarship.
4. The study of church history is a continuing journey.
5. Seeing both the faithfulness and human flaws in our history makes it more believable and realistic, not less.
6. The responsible study of church history involves learning, repentance, and transformation.
7. The church has a long-standing tradition that it does not legislate or mandate positions on matters of church history.
8. We need to create a respectful culture of dialogue about matters of history.
9. Our faith is grounded in God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For the complete text of the principles link to [www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/history.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/history.asp)

## We Share Sacraments

*Look especially to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body.*  
— Doctrine and Covenants 158:11c

*Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:2b

The church throughout the world celebrates sacraments. These special ministries use common symbols and familiar procedures to draw us into relationship with God, who seeks to establish covenant with us. The sacraments embody God’s grace and peace and lead to transformation of our lives and communities. The sacraments shape our identity and community life as followers of Jesus Christ. As we experience the blessings available through sacraments, we are empowered to share the peace of Jesus Christ and to fulfill our mission in the world.

## We Share Enduring Principles

### The Foundation: God, Christ, Holy Spirit

God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and continuing presence through the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by scripture, is the foundation of our faith, identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

In faithful response to our heritage and continuing experience with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we endeavor to uphold the following enduring principles (values, concepts, themes) as essential components of church identity and mission.

Enduring principles define the essence, heart, or soul of church identity, mission, and message. They describe the personality of the church as expressed through its participants, congregations, and affiliate organizations throughout the world.

Some call enduring principles “core values.” Others call them “foundational concepts.” Use whatever terms make the most sense in the setting where you are writing, sharing, teaching, or preaching. For general official purposes, the World Church will use the term “Enduring Principles.”

### Enduring Principles

- Grace and Generosity
- Sacredness of Creation
- Continuing Revelation
- Worth of All Persons
- All Are Called
- Responsible Choices
- Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)
- Unity in Diversity
- Blessings of Community

Each principle follows with statements that help explain its meaning. Each set of statements ends with “we” statements that emphasize calling and desired response. The statements following each principle are not meant to be limiting or comprehensive. They are provided as

helps. Use phrases, illustrations, stories, testimonies, scripture passages, and additional points to provide clarity and understanding for those with whom you are sharing.

## Grace and Generosity

- God's grace, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.
- Having received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.
- We offer all we are and have to God's purposes as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity.

## Sacredness of Creation

- In the beginning, God created and called it all good.
- Spirit and material, seen and unseen, are related.
- Creation's power to create or destroy reminds us of our vulnerability in this life.
- God is still creating to fulfill divine purpose.
- We join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.

## Continuing Revelation

- Scripture is an inspired and indispensable witness of human response to God's revelation of divine nature.
- God graciously reveals divine will today as in the past.
- The Holy Spirit inspires and provides witness to divine truth.
- In humility, individually and in community, we prayerfully listen to understand God's will for our lives, the church, and creation more completely.

## Worth of All Persons

- God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth.
- God wants all people to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.
- We seek to uphold and restore the worth of all people individually and in community, challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth.
- We join with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed.

## All Are Called

- God graciously gives people gifts and opportunities to do good and to share in God's purposes.
- Jesus Christ invites people to follow him by becoming disciples who share his life and ministry.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We respond faithfully, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to our best understanding of God's call.

## Responsible Choices

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some

people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.

- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices.
- We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

## Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)

- God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation.
- Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom (peace), reveals the meaning of God's peace in all aspects of life.
- The vision of Zion is to promote God's reign on earth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, through the leavening influence of just and peaceful communities.
- We courageously and generously share the peace of Jesus Christ with others.
- Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore peace (shalom) to creation.
- We celebrate God's peace wherever it appears or is being pursued by people of good will.

## Unity in Diversity

- The Community of Christ is a diverse, international family of disciples, seekers, and congregations.
- Local and worldwide ministries are interdependent and important to the church's mission.
- The church embraces diversity and unity through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We seek agreement or common consent in important matters. If we cannot achieve agreement, we commit to ongoing dialogue and lovingly uphold our common faith in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church.
- We confess that our lack of agreement on certain matters is hurtful to some of God's beloved children and creation.

## Blessings of Community

- The gospel of Jesus Christ is expressed best in community life where people become vulnerable to God's grace and each other.
- True community includes compassion for and solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.
- True community upholds the worth of persons while providing a healthy alternative to self-centeredness, isolation, and conformity.
- Sacred community provides nurture and growth opportunities for all people, especially those who can not fully care for themselves.
- We value our connections and share a strong sense of trust in and belonging with one another—even if we never have met.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We are called to create communities of Christ's peace in our families and congregations and across villages, tribes, nations, and throughout creation.

To see how church members throughout the world express the enduring principles of the church, follow the link to the statement: “We Are One, We Are Many.”  
[www.CofChrist.org/discernment/onemany.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/discernment/onemany.asp)

## We Share the Temple as Life-Giving Symbol

*And, it (the Temple) shall be a place in which the essential meaning of the Restoration as healing and redeeming agent is given new life and understanding, inspired by the life and witness of the Redeemer of the world.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 156:5e

*Let it (the Temple) stand as a towering symbol of a people who knew injustice and strife on the frontier and who now seek the peace of Jesus Christ throughout the world.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:2b

*Become a people of the Temple—those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:2a

*...the Temple calls the entire church to become a sanctuary of Christ’s peace, where people from all nations, ethnicities, and life circumstances can be gathered into a spiritual home without dividing walls, as a fulfillment of the vision for which Jesus Christ sacrificed his life.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:8c.

The spiraling, Christ-centered symbolism of the Temple and its defined purposes reveal the essence of God’s presence with us. These images and concepts serve to focus the church on its true identity, message, and mission. As we become a people of the Temple, we will be led to embrace what “matters most” in the life of the church. In fact, without the ongoing influence of the Temple, we would not be as focused as we are on:

- The need to approach the Divine in awe and wonder in an increasingly skeptical age.
- God’s vision of peace for creation.
- The interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual dimensions of the universe.
- Peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit as the essence of Jesus Christ’s ministry.
- Wholeness of body, mind, and spirit as a desirable condition for all.
- The essential meaning of the restoration as healing and redeeming agent.
- The disciple’s lifelong inner and outer journey as depicted by the Temple’s symbolism.
- The church’s call to “pursue peace” and be “a sanctuary of Christ’s peace” throughout the world.
- The call to engage in ecumenical and interfaith relationships because the Temple is a house

of prayer for all faiths.

The Temple Strategy Team has defined the focus of the Temple as:

## Restoring God's Shalom: Individual and Community Journey of Transformation.

The idea and language of "shalom" best capture a holistic and scripturally sound basis for ministries consistent with the symbol and stated purposes of the Temple.

We uphold the purpose of restoring God's shalom by integrating the disciplines of worship, formation, and praxis to bring about transformation.

### Worship

*Loving and adoring the God of Peace* — Isaiah 55:12

*Let the Temple continue to come to life as a sacred center of worship, education, community building, and discipleship preparation for all ages.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:8b

### Formation

*Guiding our feet into the way of Peace* — Luke 1:79

*God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ.*

— Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a

### Praxis

(A recurring process of transformative action and reflection.)

*Seeking and pursuing Peace* —Psalm 34:14

*Transformative encounters with the Eternal Creator and Reconciler await those who follow its (Temple) spiritual pathways of healing, reconciliation, peace, strengthening of faith, and knowledge.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a

## We Share Basic Beliefs

### Basic Beliefs of Community of Christ

#### Preface

The Good News of Jesus Christ is at the center of the faith and beliefs of Community of Christ. We are a worldwide community and are committed to follow Jesus, bring forth the kingdom of God, and seek together the revealing, renewing presence of the Holy Spirit. We offer here our basic beliefs, not as the last word, but as an open invitation to all to embark on the adventure of discipleship. As we seek God's continuing guidance, we encourage all people to study the scriptures and think about their experiences as they engage in the life of the church.

## God

We believe in one living God who meets us in the testimony of Israel, is revealed in Jesus Christ, and moves through all creation as the Holy Spirit. We affirm the Trinity—God who is a community of three persons. All things that exist owe their being to God: mystery beyond understanding and love beyond imagination. This God alone is worthy of our worship.

## Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Word made flesh, the Savior of the world, fully human and fully divine. Through Jesus' life and ministry, death and resurrection, God reconciles the world and breaks down the walls that divide. Christ is our peace.

Web link: [www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/christology.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/christology.asp)

## The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, Giver of Life, holy Wisdom, true God. The Spirit moves through and sustains creation; endows the church for mission; frees the world from sin, injustice, and death; and transforms disciples. Wherever we find love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control, there the Holy Spirit is working.

## Creation

As an expression of Divine love, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and called them "good." Everything belongs to God and should be cherished and used justly according to divine purposes. God sees creation as a whole without separation of spirit and element. God calls people of every generation to join with God as stewards in the loving care of creation.

## Humanity

Every human being is created in the image of God. In Jesus Christ, God took on the limits of human flesh and culture, and is known through them. We therefore affirm without exception the worth of every human being. We also affirm that God has blessed humankind with the gift of agency: the ability to choose whom or what we will serve within the circumstances of our lives.

## Sin

God created us to be agents of love and goodness. Yet we misuse our agency individually and collectively. We take the gifts of creation and of self and turn them against God's purposes with tragic results. Sin is the universal condition of separation and alienation from God and one another. We are in need of divine grace that alone reconciles us with God and one another.

## Salvation

The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ: forgiveness of sin, and healing from separation, brokenness, and the power of violence and death. This healing is for individuals, human societies, and all of creation. This new life is the loving gift of God's grace that becomes ours through faith and repentance. Baptism is how we initially express our commitment to lifelong discipleship. As we yield our lives to Christ in baptism we enter Christian

community (the body of Christ) and have the promise of salvation. We experience salvation through Jesus Christ, but affirm that God's grace has no bounds, and God's love is greater than we can know.

## The Church

God intends Christian faith to be lived in companionship with Jesus Christ and with other disciples in service to the world. The church of Jesus Christ is made of all those who respond to Jesus' call. Community of Christ is part of the whole body of Christ. We are called to be a prophetic people, proclaiming the peace of Jesus Christ and creating communities where all will be welcomed and brought into renewed relationship with God, and where there will be no poor.

## Revelation

We affirm the Living God is ever self-revealing. God is revealed to the world in the testimony of Israel, and above all in Jesus Christ. By the Holy Spirit we continue to hear God speaking today. The church is called to listen together for what the Spirit is saying and then faithfully respond.

## Scripture

Scripture is writing inspired by God's Spirit and accepted by the church as the normative expression of its identity, message, and mission. We affirm the Bible as the foundational scripture for the church. In addition, Community of Christ uses the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants—not to replace the witness of the Bible or improve on it, but because they confirm its message that Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. When responsibly interpreted and faithfully applied, scripture provides divine guidance and inspired insight for our discipleship.

Web link: [www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/scripture.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/OurFaith/scripture.asp)

## Sacraments

Sacraments are special ministries given to the church to convey the grace of Jesus Christ to his followers and all those he yearns to touch with his compassion. Sacraments are baptism, confirmation, the Lord's Supper, marriage, blessing of children, laying on of hands for the sick, ordination to the priesthood, and the evangelist's blessing. In these ministries, God sanctifies common elements of creation to bless human life and to renew and form the church to seek the peaceful kingdom of God.

Web link: [www.CofChrist.org/sacraments/](http://www.CofChrist.org/sacraments/)

## Discipleship

Being a Christian is more than holding a list of right ideas; it is about radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life. God's boundless love sets us free for lives of responsible stewardship in which we generously offer our lives in service to God's reign. Discipleship is both an inward and outward journey. Jesus calls us to follow him and to invite others to experience the transforming power of his grace

## Ministry

Ministry is humble service offered according to the model of Jesus, who calls every disciple to share in ministry for the world. Some disciples are called by God and ordained to priesthood offices to serve the mission of the church in specialized ways. The Holy Spirit gives complementary gifts and abilities to all disciples to equip the body of Christ for its witness in the world.

## The Reign of God

The Reign of God is the coming triumph of love, justice, mercy and peace that one day will embrace all of creation. Jesus' life and ministry were the living expression of this promise. He taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom's full coming and sent them out into the world to be living emblems of that new creation. "Zion" expresses our commitment to herald God's peaceable kingdom on earth by forming Christ-centered communities in families, congregations, neighborhoods, cities, and throughout the world.

## Peace

Peace is God's shalom: justice, righteousness, wholeness, and the well-being of the entire creation. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to preach the kingdom and to be our peace through the cross. The Holy Spirit empowers us for the costly pursuit of peace and justice for all people.

## Resurrection and Eternal Life

Christ is risen! Thus we believe that God is God of life, not of death. By faith we share in eternal life even now. In Christ, God's love finally will overcome all that demeans and degrades the creation, even death itself. Easter also gives us hope that the tragic suffering and death of victims, throughout history, is not the last word. We believe the Holy Spirit will transform all creation to share in the glory of God.

## Judgment

The living God whom we serve is a God of justice and mercy. God cares about how we treat our neighbors and enemies and how we make use of creation's gifts. It matters supremely to God how we welcome the poor, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned, and the rejected. We affirm in Scripture's light that Jesus Christ is advocate and judge of the living and the dead.

## End Time

We press forward together in service to God, knowing that our labor is not in vain. The future of the creation belongs to the Prince of Peace, not to those who oppress, dominate, or destroy. As we anticipate that future, we devote ourselves to seek Christ's peace and pursue it. We do not know the day or hour of Christ's coming but know only that God is faithful. With faith in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we face the future in hopeful longing, and with the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

## Enduring Principles and Basic Beliefs

What is the relationship between enduring principles and basic beliefs?

When people try to understand the church's identity, mission, and message, they bring

different ways of perceiving reality, which leads to different questions.

What is the church like? Enduring principles are the underlying truths and affirmations that shape the personality of the church. Enduring principles guide how we live in our communities, families, workplaces, congregations, and cultures. They describe how we experience and share the gospel and the church with others.

What does the church believe? Basic beliefs are the more comprehensive, rational explanations of what the church holds to be true, arranged in categories that are part of the broader Christian tradition. Basic beliefs represent a deepening level of inquiry about the gospel and the church.

We need both ways of expressing the identity, mission, and message of the church, along with the others described in this document, to ensure that people can explore and experience the gospel in ways that are the most informing and transforming for them.

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### Suggested Missionary Resources