



## The Table is open

**T**hat means that all are invited to respond to Christ's invitation to draw closer to God around the communion table no matter where you come from, what you've done or who you are. All are welcome. For Disciples, the open table is a powerful symbol of our deep commitment to Christian unity. The open Table honors diversity even as it celebrates unity in Christ.

Disciples congregations celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday. The Table is not only at the center of worship in our congregations, it is at the center of who we are as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

We don't stay at the Table. We move out into the world to fulfill our mission, to be and share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

We believe that God is calling the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to be a faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. (Micah 6:8)

### **PREAMBLE** to *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

*As members of the Christian Church,  
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of the living God,  
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.*

*In Christ's name and by his grace  
we accept our mission of witness  
and service to all people.*

*We rejoice in God,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and in God's covenant of love  
which binds us to God and to one another.*

*Through baptism into Christ  
we enter into newness of life  
and are made one with the whole people of God.*

*In the communion of the Holy Spirit  
we are joined together in discipleship  
and in obedience to Christ.*

*At the Table of the Lord  
we celebrate with thanksgiving  
the saving acts and presence of Christ.*

*Within the universal church  
we receive the gift of ministry  
and the light of scripture.*

*In the bonds of Christian faith  
we yield ourselves to God  
that we may serve the One  
whose kingdom has no end.*

*Blessing, glory, and honor  
be to God forever. Amen.*

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**Disciples.org***

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**CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(Disciples of Christ)**

in the United States and Canada

## Discover *the* Disciples

## We are Disciples of Christ,



a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

– *Disciples identity statement*





# What do Disciples *Believe?*



## Like most Christians, Disciples affirm:

- Jesus Christ is the son of the Living God and offers saving grace to all.
- All people are God's children.

## Beliefs and practices usually associated with Disciples include:

- **Open Communion.** The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is celebrated in weekly worship. It is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Freedom of belief.** Disciples are called together around belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Persons are free to follow their consciences guided by the Bible, the Holy Spirit, study and prayer, and are expected to extend that freedom to others. We hold the centrality of scripture, recognizing that each person has the freedom - and the responsibility - to study God's Word within the community of the church.
- **Baptism by immersion.** In baptism the old self-centered life is set aside, and a new life of trust in God begins. Although Disciples practice baptism by immersion, other baptism traditions are honored.
- **Belief in the oneness of the church.** All Christians are called to be one in Christ and to find ways to work together in showing God's love through witness and service. We hear a special calling to make visible the unity of all Christians. In our diversity we belong to one another because we commonly belong to Christ.
- **The ministry of all believers.** Both ministers and lay persons lead in worship, service and spiritual growth. We affirm the priesthood of all believers, rejoicing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit - which include the gift of leadership - that God has given for the common good.



## The Chalice

The chalice symbolizes the central place of communion in worship. The X-shaped cross of the disciple Andrew is a reminder of the ministry of each person and the importance of evangelism.

# Our *Vision*

## True Community

Although each Disciples congregation has its own personality, all have members who care for each other, opportunities to grow and learn, and ways to serve others. In Disciples congregations, study and fellowship groups offer opportunities to ask honest questions, share opinions, and discover ways to grow in faith.

## Deep Christian Spirituality

Disciples encourage one another in the spiritual disciplines that open us to being shaped by God, such as prayer, Bible study, worship, stewardship, service, and hospitality to strangers.

## A Passion for Justice

We work in our communities to make a difference, whether through feeding the hungry or advocating for fairness. We "get dirty for Jesus" bringing hope after disasters. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is committed to becoming a pro-reconciling, anti-racist church.



# History *and* Governance

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was founded in the early 1800s in the United States. The founders envisioned a united church of Jesus Christ modeled on the New Testament. We structure our community around the biblical idea of covenant, emphasizing not obedience to human authority but accountability to one another because of our shared belief in Christ.

Today our 3,100 congregations are self-governing, calling their own leadership. Worship services may be formal or informal, and include women and men in leadership. Open discussion of issues is encouraged and diversity of opinion is common.

The work of the church is carried out in three expressions - congregations, regions, and general ministries - in covenant with one another. General ministries specialize in particular forms of ministry from advocacy to financial resources, programming to care for the marginalized.