

**STATEMENT
OF
FAITH**

of the

Wakeshma

Community

Church

2006 Edition

Editorial comments

The editorial committee has worked diligently to make this Statement of Faith as accurate and as understandable as possible. To this end, we have used contemporary language wherever possible. However, words that carry precise theological meaning and definition have been retained. Words that are unusual or obsolete, have been marked with an asterisk (*) and included in the glossary at the end (pp.15-16).

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Introduction

The Christian Church has stood the test of time in the power of her risen Lord Jesus Christ. Through two thousand years of church history, Christians in several nations and at various times have felt the need to clearly articulate and defend the faith against the misrepresentations of heretical doctrines and sects from within the church and from hostile forces outside.

This need to formulate the faith that had been passed down from the apostles found early expression in three great early creeds*: 1) the famous Apostles' Creed, a brief statement on the Trinity and the person and work of Christ, dated about A.D. 200; 2) the Nicene Creed, A.D. 381, reaffirmed the Scriptural position of the co-equality of the Son of God with the Father, thereby marking a major triumph of orthodoxy* over the Arian* heresy. It also affirmed the full deity of the Holy Spirit; and 3) the Definition of Chalcedon, the last creed drawn up by a council representing the whole church, formulated in A.D. 451, spelled out the apostolic teaching of the two natures of Jesus. These three creeds formed the core of the doctrinal teaching of the ancient church, and have been embraced by the church down to our own time. Wakeshma Community Church along with the majority of Protestant churches, embraces these classic statements (included on pages 12-14) by this Statement of Faith.

However, in summarizing the doctrines of Scripture it is wise to refrain from stating too much, for the more comprehensive a confession or statement of faith might appear to be, the more dogmatic it tends to become. This is the lesson of history. No merely human words, even the words of Christian people, can ever adequately condense the contents of the Scriptures, the Word of God. Since the formulation of any doctrine based upon a verse of Scripture in isolation from its context is dangerous, let this Statement of Faith direct the reader to the Holy Scriptures, the only infallible rule of faith and conduct for every true believer in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Article 1. **God**

There is only one living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchanging in His wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and love; the Creator and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible.

The Scripture reveals that in God there are three persons, of one substance, who are equal in power, eternity, and glory; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—one God in Trinity.

Principal Scriptures:

The Greatness or Natural Attributes of God

God is a Spirit: John 1:18; 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-16.

God is a unique and unified being: Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; Isaiah 42:8; 44:6; Zechariah 14:9; Mark 12:29,32; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

God is living and active: Exodus 3:14; 1 Kings 18:24,38; Job 22:13,14,17; Psalm 10:11-14; Psalms 94:7-9; 121:4; Isaiah 45:7; Ezekiel 8:12; Amos 3:6; Hebrews 11:6; John 17:3.

God is personal and free: Exodus 3:14; Psalm 94:9,10; 147:11; Jeremiah 10:10; Ephesians 1:9-11

God has no beginning or end: Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 1:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16.

God has no cause: John 5:26; 6:57; Romans 11:33-36.

God is stable and consistent: Psalm 102:24-27; Malachi 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:13; James 1:17.

God is everywhere. He is both

a) transcendent*: 1 Samuel 15:29; 1 Chr. 29:11; 2 Chr. 6:18; Isaiah 6:1-3; 40:12-15; Rev. 4;

b) immanent*: Psalm 139:7-12; Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 23:23,24; Acts 17:24-28.

God knows everything: Psalm 33:13-15; 139:1-6; 147:4,5; Ezekiel 11:5; Amos 9:1-4; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20.

God is able to do all things which are proper objects of his power: Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Jeremiah 32:17; Amos 9:5,6; Matthew 19:26; Mark 14:36.

The Goodness or Moral Attributes of God

God is holy, righteous, and just: Genesis 18:25; Leviticus 19:2; Ezra 9:15; Psalms 5:4; 11:7; Psalms 99:3,5,9; 103:6; Isaiah 1:4; 6:1-3; 44:6-20; 57:15; Hosea 11:9; Habakkuk 1:13; John 17:25; Romans 2:2; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 1:15,16.

God is genuine, truthful, and faithful: Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalms 36:5; 100:5; 119:89,90; Lamentations 3:22,23; John 17:3; Romans 3:4-6,21-26; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 3:7.

God is love and expresses it in benevolence, grace, mercy, and patience: Deuteronomy 33:3; Psalms 33:5; 103:2-18; 107:1,8,15; 145:8,9; Isaiah 63:9; Zephaniah 3:17; Matthew 5:45; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:13,14; John 3:16; 13:1; Acts 14:17; 17:25; Romans 2:4; 5:8; Ephesians 2:4,5; James 5:11; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:1; 4:8-16.

Article 2. **The Person and Work of Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, who is the Word of the Father, the only begotten of the Father from everlasting, and of one substance with the Father, took upon Himself the nature of man in the womb of the virgin Mary; to the effect that two whole and perfect natures, the deity and humanity, were forever united in one Person, never to be divided.

Out of his great love, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, took on humanity to destroy the works of the devil. He truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He arose from the dead and ascended into heaven as the only perfect and acceptable sacrifice to God for the sins of the whole world, the pardon* being applied only to the elect*. From His heavenly throne our Lord Jesus Christ will return to gather His people to Himself, to judge the world and overthrow Satan forever.

The Lord Jesus Christ alone, claims full title to: Prophet, Priest, King, Sacrifice of God; the Revealer of God the Father; the Reconciler to God the Father; the Ruler for God the Father; the Savior and Redeemer for God the Father.

Principal Scriptures:

Jesus Christ's pre-existence: John 1:1-3; 8:56-58; 17:5,24; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 1:8; Proverbs 8:22-31.

Jesus' Deity: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Malachi 3:1; John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3,6,8; James 2:1; 2 Peter 1:1.

Jesus' Sonship: Matthew 16:16,17; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 22:70; John 1:18; 3:16; 5:18-23,26,27; John 14:7-12; 17:1; Romans 1:4; Colossians 1:13-17; 1 John 4:9; 5:5, 9-13,20.

Jesus Christ's incarnation*: John 1:14,18; 3:17; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 4:4,5; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 2:9-18; 10:4-14; 1 John 2:22; 4:2,3; 2 John 7.

Jesus is the one who speaks God's words like Moses: Deuteronomy 18:18,19; Matthew 21:11; Luke 4:24; 7:16; John 4:19; 7:40; Acts 7:37; Hebrews 1:1,2.

Jesus is a Priest in the order of Melchizadek: Hebrews 5:1-10; 6:20; 7:27; 10:12-14.

Jesus is a King in the line of David: Genesis 49:10; Psalms 2; 45:6,7; 72; 110:1-4; Isaiah 9:6,7; Isaiah 11:1-5,10; Jeremiah 23:5,6; Ezekiel 37:24-28; Matthew 21:1-9; 28:18; Mark 1:15; Luke 1:32,33; 23:2; John 18:36,37; Philippians 2:9; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 1:3-9; 2:5-9.

Jesus is the perfect sacrifice: John 10:17,18; 1 Corinthians 5:7,8 (Passover); Ephesus 5:2 (burnt offering); Ephesus 2:14-16 (peace offering); 1 Corinthians 5:21 (sin offering); Hebrews 10:1-22 (Day of Atonement); 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18.

Article 3. **The Holy Spirit of God**

The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son—one eternal God.

He inspired the writers of the Holy Scriptures, enlivened their minds, guiding them unerringly into all truth; and prompts an internal witness to the truth of the Gospel in the mind and heart of the believer.

He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He regenerates, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, anoints, sanctifies, and glorifies all who put their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. He produces spiritual fruit in them and distributes spiritual gifts to His people according to His will.

Principal Scriptures:

The Spirit is God: Matthew 12:31,32; 28:19; Acts 5:3,4,9; 1 Corinthians 2:9-11;
2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:4-6.

He is sent by the Father: Luke 24:49; John 15:26; John 16:13-15; Acts 16:6,7; Romans 8:9;
1 Corinthians 2:10,11; Philippians 1:19; 1 Peter 1:11,12.

He is a Person: John 14:26; Acts 11:12; Romans 8:16,26,27; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Galatians 4:6;
1 Peter 1:11.

He is called: “the Spirit” or “Your Spirit” – Psalm 139:7; 1 John 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 2:10
“the Spirit of God” – Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; 2 Chron. 24:20; Romans 8:14
“the Spirit of Christ” – Romans 8:9
“the Spirit of the Son of God” – Galatians 4:6
“the Holy Spirit” – Luke 11:13
“the Paraclete”* – John 14:26
“the Spirit of Yahweh (the LORD) – Judges 3:10-11; 1 Samuel 10:6; Isaiah 11:2; 61:1

Article 4. **The Sacred Scriptures**

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament Scriptures and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament Scriptures combine to form the Christian Bible. These books record and reveal God as working in history for the salvation of His people. As part of that work, He formed and inspired the minds and personalities of the writers and moved them to speak and write the truth about Himself and the world. Thus, these books, while being truly the words of men, are uniquely the Word of God in written form. They are “God-breathed” or “exhaled” by Him.

The individual Christian and the Christian Church are, therefore, in a subordinate position to Holy Scripture. They may not add to it or subtract from it. Similarly, no one may teach or require any practice or belief, or make any judgment that is contrary to the Scripture; for God has caused everything necessary for salvation to be written in them.

Principal Scriptures:

(Old Testament)

Exodus 24:4-7; Numbers 24:2-3; Deuteronomy 31:9-26; Joshua 1:7-8; 24:26; 1 Samuel 10:6; 1 Kings 22:5-28; 2 Kings 22:8-13; Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 8:1; Isaiah 8:16; 34:16; 40:6-8; 61:1; Jeremiah 36:1-4; Daniel 9:2; Micah 3:8.

(New Testament)

Matthew 19:4; Mark 12:36; Luke 24:27,44; John 2:22; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:23-25; Romans 3:2; 1 Corinthians 14:37-38; 2 Corinthians 10:8-11; Colossians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 3:7; 10:15; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 3:2,16; Revelation 1:1-3,10-11; Revelation 2:1,7; 22:18-19.

Article 5. **God's Eternal Purpose**

From eternity, the all-wise and holy God has freely and unchangingly determined whatever comes to pass, in a way that neither makes God the author of sin nor takes away the freedom of the human will, but rather establishes it.

From eternity, He has freely willed to save the elect* out of fallen sinful humanity (see Article 6), and having determined beforehand the means to that end, He effectively calls* justifies* sanctifies* and preserves* all who through faith have been redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Principal Scriptures:

Matthew 10:29; 25:34; John 6:37,44-45,65; 10:11,15; 17:2,6,9; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 15:6-18; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:28-30; 9:9-21; 11:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; Ephesians 1:4,11; 3:10-11; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 6:17; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2:7,8; 2 Peter 1:10; Revelation 1:8.

Article 6. **Sinful Humanity**

God created people, male and female, in His own image, in knowledge and righteousness, with dominion over all creatures, and entered into a covenant with them: life with God upon condition of perfect obedience or death for sin.

Adam and Eve, as first of the entire human race, upon the free exercise of their own will, fell from their original state of grace and perfection by disobeying the law of God. Thus the covenant made with Adam and his descendants was broken and the human race was condemned to the living death of a sinful nature and to the curse of death and hell, according to the righteous judgment of God who alone is holy.

Principal Scriptures:

(Old Testament)

Genesis 1:26; 3:14-19; 6:5,12,13; 8:21, 9:6; Job 14:1-10; 15:14-16; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; Psalms 90:5-12; 143:2; Jeremiah 17:9.

(New Testament)

Matthew 7:16; 12:33-35; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:18 – 3:23; 5:12-21; 7:5-24; 8:10,19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Galatians 3:10; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:13-15; 2 Timothy 3:8; James 3:9; 4:14; 2 Peter 2:4-22; 3:7-8.

Article 7. **The Christian Church**

The blessed company of redeemed people, who make up the church of Jesus Christ, exist for the purpose of worshiping God in spirit and in truth, receiving the benefit of mutual edification through fellowship, and the proclamation of the Word of God. The church guards and proclaims the Gospel to the world in obedience to Christ's command, for it is through the church that the knowledge of God and His eternal purpose is disclosed to the world.

The universal (or catholic*) church of Jesus Christ is represented to the world locally by congregations of faithful people of God, who have been identified publicly by 1) baptism in water; and in 2) the frequent remembrance of Christ's death and celebration of his return by Holy Communion. The true members of the church of Jesus Christ are those who have humbly confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and who sincerely believe that "...God has raised Him from the dead."

Scriptures: (New Testament)

Matthew 16:16-18; 18:15-17; John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42,44-47; 7:38; 14:23; 20:17-35;
Romans 12:4-8; 16:1; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 11:29; 12:12-13,28; 16:15; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22;
Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18,24; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13;
1 Timothy 3:1-13; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25; 12:22,23; 13:7,17,24;
James 5:14; 1 Peter 2:5-9; 5:1-4; Revelation 5:9,10; 21:2,3.

Article 8. **Last Things**

The bodies of all who die return to dust, but their souls, neither die nor sleep but return immediately to the Lord who created them. The souls of the righteous dead in Christ, being made perfect in holiness, are received into heaven where they behold the face of God in glory, awaiting the redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked dead are cast into hell where they remain in torment and utter darkness awaiting the judgment day of the Lord.

Besides heaven and hell, the Holy Scriptures reveal no other destiny for the souls and resurrected bodies of those who have died.

God has appointed a day in which He will judge all people through Jesus Christ, an event preceded by the visible and personal return of Jesus to gather His people, both living and dead, to Himself. Satan and his angels, together with all who have not repented of their sins, will be judged and condemned to hell, there to be punished with everlasting fire and torment, separated from the presence of the Lord.

God will ultimately cause the destruction of the entire world by fire, and by this universal holocaust, the triumph of God in Christ Jesus over all evil will be completed. Immediately thereafter, God will create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells forever and ever. Amen.

Scriptures: (New Testament)

Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:6,9-10; 14:10-12;
1 Corinthians 15:18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 5:10; Hebrews 9:27;
1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 6:9-11; 20:12-15.

The Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living 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.

The Nicene* Creed

(or *Creed of the 150 Fathers*, A.D. 381)

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 Son¹
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.

¹ “and the Son” was added later in the Western churches and is not used by the Orthodox Churches*

The Definition of Chalcedon*

(A.D. 451)

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and also in human-ness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves as far as his human-ness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began, he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these “last days,” for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his human-ness.

[We also teach] that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten—in two natures; [and we do this] without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the “properties” of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one “person” and in one *hypostasis* [Greek for “person” or “substance”]. They are not divided or cut into two *prosopa* [Greek for “face” or “person”], but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of the Fathers [the creed] has handed down to us.

Glossary of Terms

apostle(s): literally “sent ones” but used in an exclusive way of the original apostles of Jesus who he commissioned to preach and teach in his name.

apostolic faith: true teaching of the faith handed down from the original apostles of Jesus

Arian heresy: the teaching of Arius and his followers that Jesus is a lesser being than God, the Father. In their view, Jesus was a created being and not of the same substance as the Father. This view was found by the first council of the whole Christian Church meeting in Nicea (A.D. 325) to be against the teaching of the original Apostles, and was condemned as false. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach a modern form of this heresy.

calls (calling): the activity of God in inviting and summoning people into fellowship with him

catholic Church: the whole (or universal) Christian people of God. Roman Catholic refers to the Church of Rome and its adherents.

Chalcedon: the name of the small city near Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey), where the Definition was formulated

creed(s): a summary of teaching that is to be believed. The word comes from the Latin “credo” which means “I believe.”

elect: People chosen by God are said to be his “elect.”

incarnation: Jesus Christ, the divine Son, took on human flesh and nature without sacrificing, surrendering, or contaminating his deity. He is the unique God-man.

immanence: the “nearness” of God to us. God is active within his creation, and within the human race, even those who do not believe in him. He works indirectly (as well as directly) to accomplish his purposes. Some knowledge of him can be learned from his creation. Some common ground exists with unbelievers which can serve as points of contact for evangelism. Since there is a danger of overemphasis, *immanence* must be balanced by an understanding of God’s *transcendence* (q.v.).

justifies (justification): to make righteous before God

Nicene: from the name of the small city Nicea near Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey) where this creed was formulated

orthodoxy (orthodox Christian faith): true Christian faith and practice. (see apostolic faith)

Orthodox Churches: churches from the Eastern Roman Empire historically, usually having taken on national characteristics. Examples are the Greek Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, etc.

Paraclete: a Greek word found in John 14, which may be translated “comforter,” “advocate,” “helper” or “counselor”

pardon: the judicial “setting aside” of a guilty verdict of a convict and setting him free

preserves (perseverance): the action of God by which he keeps Christians from falling away from the faith

sanctifies (sanctification): the divinely powered process of making believers holy

transcendence: the distance and difference of God from us. God is greater than us and there will always be a difference between God and human beings. Reverence is appropriate. Salvation is not our achievement. While God uses natural means, we will depend on him for His working, including ways that transcend human ability. Since there is a danger of overemphasis, God’s *transcendence* must be balanced by an understanding of God’s *immanence* (q.v.).