

A Confessional Church

The Well is a confessional church. As such, we adhere to a written confession of faith that we believe to be a good and accurate summary of the Bible's teaching. Our confessional standards consist of the Augsburg Confession of Faith and the Larger and Small Catechisms. We believe these standards contain carefully worded summaries of the contents of sacred Scripture. To be sure, acceptance of every confessional distinctive is not required for membership at the Well. One may be a participating member of the Well by affirming the evangelical distinctive that salvation is accomplished by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. Nevertheless, the Leaders of The Well adhere to the system of doctrine taught by the Augsburg Confession. The confessions adopt a theology that may be defined as catholic, evangelical, and reformational.

The Well's theology is "catholic" in that it reaffirms the doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy such as those defined by the Apostles Creed and the great ecumenical councils of the first millennium of Christian history such as the Councils of Nicea, Chalcedon, Constantinople, and others. These catholic doctrines include such affirmations as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the atonement of Christ, and other doctrines that are integral to historic Christianity.

This theology is "evangelical" in that it affirms with historic Protestantism such vital doctrines as Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide. Sola Scriptura refers to the article that the Bible, as the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, is the sole written revelation that rules the faith and practice of the Christian community and alone can bind the conscience. Sola Fide refers to the doctrine of justification by faith alone whereby the believer is justified before God by the free grace of God by which He imputes the righteousness

of Christ to the believer (Rom. 5:18-19). The sole ground of our justification is the merit of Jesus, which is imputed to all who sincerely believe His Promise. Though good works flow necessarily from all justified persons, these works are not the meritorious grounds of our justification (Eph. 2:8f).

The theology is "reformational" in that, in addition to catholic and evangelical doctrine, the distinctive doctrines of the magisterial Reformers such as Luther, Calvin and Cranmer are also embraced in a way that distinguishes the Reformed tradition from other Protestant bodies. In a word, Reformational theology is Word centered. The structure of the biblical demands ("Law") and the promise of Forgiveness (i.e. "Gospel") is the framework for this theology. The truth of Christ is the core of all theology.

The Solas of the Protestant Reformation

Sola Scriptura The Bible is the only written divine revelation, our only infallible rule for faith and life; alone binding the conscience of believers absolutely (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16).

Sola Fide Justification is by faith alone. By God's free grace, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us by faith and is the sole ground of our acceptance by God, by which our sins are pardoned (Rom. 5:1; Gal 2:16).

Solus Christus Jesus Christ is the only mediator through Whose Obedience we are redeemed (John 14:6; John 3:16).

Sola Gratia Our salvation rests solely on the work of God's grace for us (Eph. 2:1-10).

Soli Deo Gloria Salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, therefore to God alone belongs the glory (Isa. 42:8; Col. 3:17).