

Basis of Faith

1 Introduction

As members of the Church of England within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, *we affirm* the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, of which faith the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion are a general exposition. Standing in the Reformation tradition, we lay especial emphasis on the grace of God – his unmerited mercy – as expressed in the doctrines which follow.

2 God as the Source of Grace

In continuity with the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Christian creeds, *we worship* one God in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God has created all things, and us in his own image; all life, truth, holiness and beauty come from him. His Son, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, rose and ascended to reign in glory.

3 The Bible as the Revelation of Grace

We receive the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the wholly reliable revelation and record of God's grace, given by the Holy Spirit as the true Word of God written. The Bible has been given to lead us to salvation, to be the ultimate rule for Christian faith and conduct, and the supreme authority by which the church must ever reform itself and judge its traditions.

4 The Atonement as the Work of Grace

We believe that Jesus Christ came to save lost sinners. Though sinless, he bore our sins and their judgement, on the cross, thus accomplishing our salvation. By raising Christ bodily from the dead, God vindicated him as Lord and Saviour and proclaimed his victory. Salvation is in Christ alone.

5 The Church as the Community of Grace

We hold that the church is God's covenant community, whose members, drawn from every nation, having been justified by grace through faith, inherit the promises made to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ. As a fellowship of the Spirit, manifesting its fruit and exercising his gifts, it is called to worship God, grow in grace, and bear witness to him and his kingdom. God's church

is one body and must ever strive to discover and experience that unity in truth and love which it has in Christ, especially through its confession of the apostolic faith and in its observance of the dominical sacraments.

6 The Sacraments as the Signs of Grace

We maintain that the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion proclaim the Gospel as effective and visible signs of our justification and sanctification, and as true means of God's grace to those who repent and believe. Baptism is the sign of forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Spirit, new birth to righteousness, and entry into the fellowship of the people of God. Holy Communion is the sign of the living, nourishing presence of Christ through his Spirit to his people; the memorial of his one, perfect, completed and all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, from whose achievement all may benefit but in whose offering none can share; and an expression of our corporate life of sacrificial thanksgiving and service.

7 Ministry as the Stewardship of Grace

We share, as the people of God, in a royal priesthood common to the whole church, and in the community of the Suffering Servant. Our mission is the proclamation of the Gospel by the preaching of the word, as well as by caring for the needy, challenging evil, and promoting justice and a more responsible use of the world's resources. It is the particular vocation of bishops and presbyters, together with deacons and authorised lay ministers, to build up the body of Christ in truth and love, as pastors, teachers and servants of the servants of God.

8 Christ's Return as the Triumph of Grace

We look forward expectantly to the final manifestation of Christ's grace and glory when he comes again to raise the dead, judge the world, vindicate his chosen, and bring his kingdom to its eternal fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth.

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Adapted from the Church of England Evangelical Council's Basis of Faith