

Remit No. 6A – Declaration of Church Doctrine

Background:

The 40th General Council (2009) adopted the policy that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles;
- the 1940 statement of faith;
- “A New Creed”; and
- “A Song of Faith;”

each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*.

The 40th General Council (2009) adopted the policy that the doctrine of the United Church be those standards subordinate to scripture approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions set out in *The United Church of Canada Act*.

This would entail a change to the Basis of Union.

The 40th General Council (2009) authorized this Remit to test the will of the Church with respect to the foregoing.

The Question:

Does the Presbytery agree that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognize the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles; and
 - the statement of faith generally approved and commended by the 9th General Council (1940);
- each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*;

and that the doctrine of the United Church be those standards subordinate to scripture that are approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions set out in *The United Church of Canada Act*.

and that the Basis of Union shall be amended to reflect this policy, as follows:

changes shown

DOCTRINE

2.1 The United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture.

2.2 The United Church recognizes as doctrine the following standards subordinate to scripture:

2.2.1 the 20 articles of doctrine, set out in sections 2.3.0 through 2.3.20; and

2.2.2 “A Statement of Faith, 1940,” set out in sections 2.4.0 through 2.4.12.

Doctrine

~~2.0~~ 2.3.0 We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational branches of the Church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, by The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by The Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

~~2.1~~ 2.3.1 Article I. *Of God.* We believe in the one only living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, who is love, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him in the unity of the Godhead and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.

~~2.2~~ 2.3.2 Article II. *Of Revelation.* We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness of Christ.

~~2.3~~ 2.3.3 Article III. *Of the Divine Purpose.* We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God so embraces all events that, while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.

~~2.4~~ 2.3.4 Article IV. *Of Creation and Providence.* We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.

~~2.5~~ 2.3.5 Article V. *Of the Sin of Man.* We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that

we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

~~2.6~~ 2.3.6 Article VI. *Of the Grace of God.* We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to his son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation.

~~2.7~~ 2.3.7 Article VII. *Of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption, He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

~~2.8~~ 2.3.8 Article VIII. *Of the Holy Spirit.* We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to

give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort, and of love.

~~2.9~~ 2.3.9 Article IX. *Of Regeneration.* We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the gracious and mysterious operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the truths of His word and the ordinances of divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

~~2.10~~ 2.3.10 Article X. *Of Faith and Repentance.* We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive Him, trust in Him, and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of and endeavour after a new obedience to God.

~~2.11~~ 2.3.11 Article XI. *Of Justification and Sonship.* We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.

~~2.12~~ 2.3.12 Article XII. *Of Sanctification.* We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.

~~2.13~~ 2.3.13 Article XIII. *Of Prayer.* We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honour and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in Heaven, confessing unto Him our sins, and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.

~~2.14~~ 2.3.14 Article XIV. *Of the Law of God.* We believe that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the prophets, and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands for ever in truth and equity, and is not made void by faith, but on the contrary is established thereby. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and that

only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

~~2.15~~ 2.3.15 Article XV. *Of the Church.* We acknowledge one Holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, together with their children and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Saviour.

~~2.16~~ 2.3.16 Article XVI. *Of the Sacraments.* We acknowledge two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, as a means of grace, by which, working in us, He doth not only quicken but also strengthen and comfort our faith in Him, and as ordinances through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.

~~2.16.1~~ 2.3.16.1 Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

~~2.16.2~~ 2.3.16.2 The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the Cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of obedience to His law.

~~2.17~~ 2.3.17 Article XVII. *Of the Ministry.* We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries; and that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon

duly ordain or commission them to the work of the ministry.

~~2.18~~ 2.3.18 Article XVIII. *Of Church Order and Fellowship.* We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline, and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

~~2.19~~ 2.3.19 Article XIX. *Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, and the Future Life.* We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the living and the dead; that the finally impenitent shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

~~2.20~~ 2.3.20 Article XX. *Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.* We believe that it is our duty, as disciples and servants of Christ, to further the extension of His Kingdom, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive

the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

A Statement of Faith, 1940

2.4.0 Introduction.

No attempt is made to answer all the questions which devout men may reasonably ask in regard to God and man and salvation. But we believe that we have included what is essential to the life of the Church. If our purpose were apologetic we should have to use more of the language of modern science and philosophy. Because our purpose is affirmative we have as far as possible adopted rather the language of Scripture, a language which matches the supreme facts it tells of, God's acts of judgment and of mercy.

The Church's faith is the unchanging Gospel of God's holy, redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ. It is declared in Scripture; it is witnessed to both in the creeds of the Universal Church and in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches; and it is formulated for a specific purpose in our Basis of Union. But Christians of each new generation are called to state it afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs. This we have attempted to do

for the people of The United Church of Canada - seeking always to be faithful to Scripture and to the testimony of the Universal Church, and always aware that no statement of ours can express the whole truth of God.

2.4.1 I. God.

We believe in God, the eternal personal Spirit, Creator and Upholder of all things.

We believe that God, as sovereign Lord exalted above the world, orders and overrules all things in it to the accomplishment of His holy, wise, and good purposes.

We believe that God made man to love and serve Him; that He cares for him as a righteous and compassionate Father; and that nothing can either quench His love or finally defeat His gracious purpose for man.

So we acknowledge God as Creator, Upholder, and Sovereign Lord of all things, and the righteous and loving Father of men.

2.4.2 II. Jesus Christ.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, Who, for us men and our salvation became man and dwelt among us.

We believe that He lived a perfect human life, wholly devoted to the will of God and the service of man.

We believe that in Him God comes face to face with men; so that they learn that God loves them seeks their

good, bears their sorrows and their sin, and claims their exclusive faith and perfect obedience.

We believe that in Jesus Christ God acted to save man, taking, at measureless cost, man's sin upon Himself; that the Cross reveals at once God's abhorrence of sin and His saving love in its height and depth and power; and that the Cross is for all time the effectual means of reconciling the world unto God.

We believe that Jesus was raised victorious over death and declared to be the Son of God with power; and that He is alive for evermore, our Savior and our Lord.

So we acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God Incarnate, the Savior of the world.

2.4.3 III. The Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Holy Spirit by whom God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men, inspiring every right desire and every effort after truth and beauty.

We believe that the Spirit of God moves men to acknowledge their sins and accept the divine forgiveness and grace.

We believe that the Spirit was present with power at the beginning of the Church, enabling the disciples to bear witness to what they had seen and heard, filling them with love of the brethren, and hope of the coming Kingdom, and sustaining them in the sense of Christ's continuing presence in their midst.

We believe that by the same Spirit the Church is continually guided and empowered, and her members

fortified against temptation, fear and doubt, and built up in faith and holiness unto salvation.

So we acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life, through whom the creative, redeeming love of God is ever at work among men.

2.4.4 IV. The Holy Trinity.

Knowing God thus, as Creator and Father, as Redeemer in Christ, and as Holy Spirit working in us, we confess our faith in the Holy Trinity.

So we acknowledge and worship one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2.4.5 V. Man and Man's Sin.

We believe that God gave to man, as He did not to the lower creatures, capacity to share His thought and purpose, and freedom to choose whether he would or would not love and serve Him.

We believe that man has used his freedom of choice for low and selfish ends, thus estranging himself from God and his brother man, and bringing upon himself the judgment and wrath of God, so that he lives in a world of confusion and distress, and is unable of himself to fulfill God's high purpose for him.

So we acknowledge man's sin, God's righteous judgment, and man's helplessness and need.

2.4.6 VI. Redemption.

We believe that in the greatness of His love for man God has in Christ opened up a way of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin.

We believe that Christ, by living our life without sin, by dying at the hands of sinful men with faith unshaken and unfaltering love, has done for man what man could not do for himself. On the Cross He bore the burden of sin, and He broke its power; and what He did there moves men to repentance, conveys forgiveness, undoes the estrangement, and binds them to Himself in a new loyalty.

We believe that by His resurrection and exaltation Christ stands victorious over death and all evil, and that He fills those who commit themselves to Him with such grace and strength that in Him they, too, are conquerors. His redemption of man is at once an awful mystery and a glorious fact; it is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes.

So we acknowledge the unmerited love and the mercy of our God in giving His only-begotten Son that we might not perish but have everlasting life.

2.4.7 VII. The Church.

We believe that the Church, the society of the redeemed, was brought into existence by God Himself through the work and risen power of Christ, Who in calling men into fellowship with Himself calls them by the same act into fellowship with one another in Him.

We believe that the Church is the organ of Christ's mind and redemptive will, the body of which He is the Head. Under Him the Church is called to the

proclamation of the everlasting Gospel with its offer of salvation, to the worship of God, Creator and Redeemer, to the loving service of mankind, and to the care and nurture of the flock.

We believe that all members of the Church are one in Him, and that the life of the Church in every age is continuous with that of the first apostolic company. The groups commonly known as "churches" are called to share in the life of the whole Church, of all ages and of all lands, entering freely into the full heritage of thought, worship, and discipline, and living together in mutual confidence.

We believe that for the fulfillment of her mission in the world God has given to the Church the Ministry, the Scriptures and the Sacraments.

So we acknowledge one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, the Body of Christ, the household and family of God.

2.4.8 VIII. The Ministry.

We believe that God has appointed a Ministry in His Church for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the pastoral care of the people.

We believe that the Church has authority to ordain to the Ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands those whom she finds, after due trial, to be called of God thereto.

We believe that, for the due ordering of her life as a society, God has appointed a government in His

Church, to be exercised, under Christ the head, by Ministers and representatives of the people.

So we acknowledge the Holy Ministry appointed by God for the spread of the Gospel and the edification of His Church.

2.4.9 IX. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe that the great moments of God's revelation and communication of Himself to men are recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

We believe that, while God uttered His Word to man in many portions progressively, the whole is sufficient to declare His mind and will for our salvation. To Israel He made Himself known as a holy and righteous God and a Savior; the fullness of truth and grace came by Jesus Christ. The writings were collected and preserved by the Church.

We believe that the theme of all Holy Scripture is the redemptive purpose and working of God, and that herein lies its unity.

We believe that in Holy Scripture God claims the complete allegiance of our mind and heart; that the full persuasion of the truth and authority of the Word of God contained in the Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; that, using Holy Scripture, the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

So we acknowledge in Holy Scripture the true witness to God's Word and the sure guide to Christian faith and conduct.

2.4.10 X. The Sacraments.

We believe that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are effectual means through which, by common things and simple acts, the saving love of God is exhibited and communicated to His people, who receive them in faith.

We believe that in Baptism men are made members of the Christian society. Washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit signifies God's cleansing from sin and an initial participation in the gifts and graces of the new life. The children of believing parents are baptized and nurtured in the family of God so that they may in due time take upon themselves the yoke of Christ.

We believe that the Lord's Supper perpetuates the fellowship between Christ and His disciples sealed in the upper room, that at His table He is always present, and His people are nourished, confirmed, and renewed. The giving and receiving of bread and wine accompanied by His own words signifies the gracious self-giving of Christ as suffering and living Lord in such wise that His faithful people live in Him and He in them.

So we acknowledge Baptism as God's appointed means of grace at initiation into the Christian fellowship; and the Lord's Supper as His appointed means of maintaining the fellowship in health and strength, and

as the act of worship in which the whole soul of man goes out to God and God's grace comes freely to man.

2.4.11 XI. Christian Life and Duty.

We believe that the Christian life is the life lived in fellowship with Christ and His Church. It begins with repentance and faith. In repentance men turn from sin to serve the holy and forgiving God with new and glad obedience. In faith they entrust themselves to Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation.

We believe that by the teaching and example of Jesus the Holy Spirit shows men the way and the end of the Christian life, what it means to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love their neighbour as themselves.

We believe that Christian men are called to abide within the fellowship of the Church, to maintain its peace and unity, and to give diligent heed to prayer, to the reading of Scripture, to common worship and the sacraments.

We believe that they are likewise called to live as those who are of the Kingdom of God, and to seek His righteousness both in individual and social life, serving their fellow-men in love for Christ's sake, and striving and waiting in prayer for an ordered common life where the will of God for the well-being and peace of men shall be done over all the earth.

We believe that in denying themselves and in following Christ men are enabled by the Spirit of God more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness; that they are, under the hand of a faithful Father, in labour,

love, and duty, in suffering, sorrow and defeat, renewed in the inner man after the image of the crucified and victorious Christ; and that they receive in this life a foretaste of the final redemption, assurance of the divine favour, peace and joy, and the confidence that He is able to keep them to the end.

So we acknowledge the Christian life as the life lived within the family of God, with the graces and privileges, the duties and discipline, through which the Christian man grows up in all things into Christ.

2.4.12 XII. The Consummation.

We believe that the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, following on His crucifixion, gives assurance that the long struggle between sin and grace will have an end, the Kingdom be revealed in its fullness, and God's eternal purpose accomplished.

We believe that God will judge all men by Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

We believe that, while salvation is offered to all, God does not take away or override the freedom with which He has endowed men. If they stubbornly refuse His mercy and prefer sinful ways they shut themselves out from the light and joy of salvation and fall under the righteous judgment of God.

We believe that those who accept the offer of salvation and persevere in the Christian way do after death enter into the joy of their Lord, a blessedness beyond our power to conceive. They see God face to face, and in the communion of saints are partakers with the Church on earth of its labours and prayers.

So we acknowledge the righteous and merciful
judgment of God and we wait for the coming of the
Kingdom which shall have no end.

“We know Whom we have believed, and are persuaded
that He is able to keep that which we have committed to
Him.”

“To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty,
dominion and power, both now and ever.”

Remit No. 6B – Declaration of Church Doctrine

Background:

The 40th General Council (2009) adopted the policy that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles;
- the 1940 statement of faith;
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each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*.

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The Question:

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- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles; and
- “A New Creed,” generally approved by the Executive of the General Council in November, 1968, amended by the Executive of the General Council in November, 1980, and further amended by the Executive of the General Council in March, 1995; and

each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*;

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2.2 The United Church recognizes as doctrine the following standards subordinate to scripture:

2.2.1 the 20 articles of doctrine, set out in sections 2.3.0 through 2.3.20; and

2.2.2 “A New Creed,” set out in section 2.4.

Doctrine

~~2.0~~ 2.3.0 We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational branches of the Church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, by The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by The Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

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and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.

~~2.2~~ 2.3.2 Article II. *Of Revelation.* We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness of Christ.

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~~2.4~~ 2.3.4 Article IV. *Of Creation and Providence.* We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.

~~2.5~~ 2.3.5 Article V. *Of the Sin of Man.* We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away

from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

~~2.6~~ 2.3.6 Article VI. *Of the Grace of God.* We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to his son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation.

~~2.7~~ 2.3.7 Article VII. *Of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption, He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

~~2.8~~ 2.3.8 Article VIII. *Of the Holy Spirit.* We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds

from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort, and of love.

~~2.9~~ 2.3.9 Article IX. *Of Regeneration.* We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the gracious and mysterious operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the truths of His word and the ordinances of divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

~~2.10~~ 2.3.10 Article X. *Of Faith and Repentance.* We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive Him, trust in Him, and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of and endeavour after a new obedience to God.

~~2.11~~ 2.3.11 Article XI. *Of Justification and Sonship.* We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts

them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.

~~2.12~~ 2.3.12 Article XII. *Of Sanctification.* We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.

~~2.13~~ 2.3.13 Article XIII. *Of Prayer.* We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honour and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in Heaven, confessing unto Him our sins, and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.

~~2.14~~ 2.3.14 Article XIV. *Of the Law of God.* We believe that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the prophets, and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands

for ever in truth and equity, and is not made void by faith, but on the contrary is established thereby. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

~~2.15~~ 2.3.15 Article XV. *Of the Church.* We acknowledge one Holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, together with their children and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Saviour.

~~2.16~~ 2.3.16 Article XVI. *Of the Sacraments.* We acknowledge two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, as a means of grace, by which, working in us, He doth not only quicken but also strengthen and comfort our faith in Him, and as ordinances through the

observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.

~~2.16.1~~ 2.3.16.1 Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

~~2.16.2~~ 2.3.16.2 The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the Cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of obedience to His law.

~~2.17~~ 2.3.17 Article XVII. *Of the Ministry.* We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries; and that the Church,

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of the ministry.

~~2.18~~ 2.3.18 Article XVIII. *Of Church Order and Fellowship.* We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline, and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

~~2.19~~ 2.3.19 Article XIX. *Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, and the Future Life.* We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the living and the dead; that the finally impenitent shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

~~2.20~~ 2.3.20 Article XX. *Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.* We believe that it is our duty, as disciples and servants of Christ, to further the extension of His Kingdom, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the

State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

A New Creed

2.4 We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Note: If this Remit and Remit 6A are approved and enacted, then the foregoing sections 2.2.2 and 2.4 will be re-numbered as sections 2.2.3 and 2.5 respectively.

Remit No. 6C – Declaration of Church Doctrine

Background:

The 40th General Council (2009) adopted the policy that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles;
- the 1940 statement of faith;
- “A New Creed”; and
- “A Song of Faith;”

each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*.

The 40th General Council (2009) adopted the policy that the doctrine of the United Church be those standards subordinate to scripture approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions set out in *The United Church of Canada Act*.

This would entail a change to the Basis of Union.

The 40th General Council (2009) authorized this Remit to test the will of the Church with respect to the foregoing.

The Question:

Does the Presbytery agree that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognize the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles; and
 - “A Song of Faith,” adopted and commended by the 39th General Council (2006);
- each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*;

and that the doctrine of the United Church be those standards subordinate to scripture that are approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions set out in *The United Church of Canada Act*.

and that the Basis of Union shall be amended to reflect this policy, as follows:

changes shown

DOCTRINE

2.1 The United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture.

2.2 The United Church recognizes as doctrine the following standards subordinate to scripture:

2.2.1 the 20 articles of doctrine, set out in sections 2.3.0 through 2.3.20; and

2.2.2 “A Song of Faith,” set out in section 2.4.

Doctrine

~~2.0~~ 2.3.0 We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational branches of the Church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, by The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by The Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

~~2.1~~ 2.3.1 Article I. *Of God.* We believe in the one only living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, who is love, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him in the unity of the Godhead and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.

~~2.2~~ 2.3.2 Article II. *Of Revelation.* We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness of Christ.

~~2.3~~ 2.3.3 Article III. *Of the Divine Purpose.* We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God so embraces all events that, while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.

~~2.4~~ 2.3.4 Article IV. *Of Creation and Providence.* We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.

~~2.5~~ 2.3.5 Article V. *Of the Sin of Man.* We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that

we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

~~2.6~~ 2.3.6 Article VI. *Of the Grace of God.* We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to his son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation.

~~2.7~~ 2.3.7 Article VII. *Of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption, He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

~~2.8~~ 2.3.8 Article VIII. *Of the Holy Spirit.* We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to

give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort, and of love.

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~~2.12~~ 2.3.12 Article XII. *Of Sanctification.* We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.

~~2.13~~ 2.3.13 Article XIII. *Of Prayer.* We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honour and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in Heaven, confessing unto Him our sins, and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.

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only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

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~~2.16.1~~ 2.3.16.1 Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

~~2.16.2~~ 2.3.16.2 The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the Cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of obedience to His law.

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the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

A Song of Faith

2.4 God is Holy Mystery,
beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

Yet,
in love,
the one eternal God seeks relationship.

So God creates the universe
and with it the possibility of being and relating.
God tends the universe,
mending the broken and reconciling the
estranged.
God enlivens the universe,
guiding all things toward harmony with their
Source.

Grateful for God's loving action,
We cannot keep from singing.

With the Church through the ages,
we speak of God as one and triune:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We also speak of God as

Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer

God, Christ, and Spirit

Mother, Friend, and Comforter

Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love,

and in other ways that speak faithfully of

the One on whom our hearts rely,

the fully shared life at the heart of the universe.

We witness to Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

God is creative and self-giving,

generously moving

in all the near and distant corners of the

universe.

Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.

Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.

We sing thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,

of living things, diverse and interdependent,

of complex patterns of growth and evolution,

of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,

we sing of God the Creator,

the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the
Creator,

who is both in creation and beyond it.

All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.

All creation is good.

We sing of the Creator,

who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God.

In and with God,

we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.

We can discover our place as one strand in the web of
life.

We can grow in wisdom and compassion.

We can recognize all people as kin.

We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a
curse,

but as a challenge to make our lives and choices
matter.

Made in the image of God,

we yearn for the fulfillment that is life in God.

Yet we choose to turn away from God.

We surrender ourselves to sin,

a disposition revealed in selfishness, cowardice,
or apathy.

Becoming bound and complacent

in a web of false desires and wrong choices,
we bring harm to ourselves and others.

This brokenness in human life and community

is an outcome of sin.

Sin is not only personal

but accumulates
to become habitual and systemic forms
of injustice, violence, and hatred.

We are all touched by this brokenness:

the rise of selfish individualism
that erodes human solidarity;

the concentration of wealth and power
without regard for the needs of all;
the toxins of religious and ethnic bigotry;
the degradation of the blessedness of human

bodies

and human passions through sexual exploitation;
the delusion of unchecked progress and limitless

growth

that threatens our home, the earth;
the covert despair that lulls many into numb

complicity

with empires and systems of domination.

We sing lament and repentance.

Yet evil does not—cannot—

undermine or overcome the love of God.

God forgives,

and calls all of us to confess our fears and

failings

with honesty and humility.

God reconciles,

and calls us to repent the part we have played
in damaging our world, ourselves, and each

other.

God transforms,

and calls us to protect the vulnerable,
to pray for deliverance from evil,
to work with God for the healing of the world,
that all might have abundant life.

We sing of grace.

The fullness of life includes

moments of unexpected inspiration and courage

lived out,

experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness,
blessings of seeds and harvest,
friendship and family, intellect and sexuality,
the reconciliation of persons through justice
and communities living in righteousness,
and the articulation of meaning.

And so we sing of God the Spirit,

who from the beginning has swept over the face
of creation,

animating all energy and matter
and moving in the human heart.

We sing of God the Spirit,

faithful and untameable,

who is creatively and redemptively active in the
world.

The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy

not only in what is familiar,
but also in that which seems foreign.

We sing of the Spirit,

who speaks our prayers of deepest longing
and enfolds our concerns and confessions,
transforming us and the world.

We offer worship

as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
and a practice of opening ourselves
to God's still, small voice of comfort,
to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.

Through word, music, art, and sacrament,

in community and in solitude,

God changes our lives, our relationships, and
our world.

We sing with trust.

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word

passed on from generation to generation
to guide and inspire,

that we might wrestle a holy revelation for our
time and place

from the human experiences

and cultural assumptions of another era.

God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers
only.

The Spirit breathes revelatory power into scripture,

bestowing upon it a unique and normative place
in the life of the community.

The Spirit judges us critically when we abuse scripture

by interpreting it narrow-mindedly,
using it as a tool of oppression, exclusion, or
hatred.

The wholeness of scripture testifies

to the oneness and faithfulness of God.

The multiplicity of scripture testifies to its depth:

two testaments, four gospels,
contrasting points of view held in tension—
all a faithful witness to the One and Triune God,
the Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

We find God made known in Jesus of Nazareth,

and so we sing of God the Christ, the Holy One

embodied.

We sing of Jesus,

a Jew,

born to a woman in poverty

in a time of social upheaval

and political oppression.

He knew human joy and sorrow.

So filled with the Holy Spirit was he

that in him people experienced the presence of God

among them.

We sing praise to God incarnate.

Jesus announced the coming of God's reign—

a commonwealth not of domination

but of peace, justice, and reconciliation.

He healed the sick and fed the hungry.

He forgave sins and freed those held captive

by all manner of demonic powers.

He crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender.

He preached and practised unconditional love—

love of God, love of neighbour,

love of friend, love of enemy—

and he commanded his followers to love one another

as he had loved them.

Because his witness to love was threatening,

those exercising power sought to silence Jesus.

He suffered abandonment and betrayal,

state-sanctioned torture and execution.

He was crucified.

But death was not the last word.

God raised Jesus from death,

turning sorrow into joy,

despair into hope.

We sing of Jesus raised from the dead.

We sing hallelujah.

By becoming flesh in Jesus,

God makes all things new.

In Jesus' life, teaching, and self-offering,

God empowers us to live in love.

In Jesus' crucifixion,

God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world.

In Jesus' resurrection,

God overcomes death.

Nothing separates us from the love of God.

The Risen Christ lives today,

present to us and the source of our hope.

In response to who Jesus was

and to all he did and taught,

to his life, death, and resurrection,

and to his continuing presence with us through the Spirit,

we celebrate him as

the Word made flesh,

the one in whom God and humanity are perfectly joined,

the transformation of our lives, the Christ.

We sing of a church

seeking to continue the story of Jesus

by embodying Christ's presence in the world.
We are called together by Christ
as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
loving what he loved,
living what he taught,
striving to be faithful servants of God
in our time and place.

Our ancestors in faith
bequeath to us experiences of their faithful
living:
upon their lives our lives are built.
Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion
of saints,
experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign
even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and
a new earth.

The church has not always lived up to its vision.
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,
helping it to live an emerging faith while
honouring tradition,
challenging it to live by grace rather than
entitlement,
for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.

We sing of God's good news lived out,
a church with purpose:
faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
gifts shared for the good of all,
resistance to the forces that exploit and
marginalize,
fierce love in the face of violence,
human dignity defended,

members of a community held and inspired by
God,
corrected and comforted,
instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
creation's mending.
We sing of God's mission.

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian
ministry.
In the church,
some are called to specific ministries of
leadership,
both lay and ordered;
some witness to the good news;
some uphold the art of worship;
some comfort the grieving and guide the
wandering;
some build up the community of wisdom;
some stand with the oppressed and work for
justice.
To embody God's love in the world,
the work of the church requires the ministry and
discipleship
of all believers.

In grateful response to God's abundant love,
we bear in mind our integral connection
to the earth and one another;
we participate in God's work of healing and mending
creation.
To point to the presence of the holy in the world,

the church receives, consecrates, and shares
visible signs of the grace of God.

In company with the churches
of the Reformed and Methodist traditions,
we celebrate two sacraments as gifts of Christ:
baptism and holy communion.

In these sacraments the ordinary things of life
—water, bread, wine—
point beyond themselves to God and God’s love,
teaching us to be alert
to the sacred in the midst of life.

Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are born into the brokenness of this world.

Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are surrounded by God’s redeeming love.

Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity
is the means by which we are received, at any
age,

into the covenanted community of the church.
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith
and cleansing by the power of God.

Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,
and transforming power of God’s love
and our grateful response to that grace.

Carrying a vision of creation healed and restored,
we welcome all in the name of Christ.

Invited to the table where none shall go hungry,
we gather as Christ’s guests and friends.

In holy communion
we are commissioned to feed as we have been
fed,

forgive as we have been forgiven,
love as we have been loved.

The open table speaks of the shining promise
of barriers broken and creation healed.

In the communion meal, wine poured out and bread
broken,

we remember Jesus.

We remember not only the promise but also the price
that he paid

for who he was,

for what he did and said,

and for the world’s brokenness.

We taste the mystery of God’s great love for us,
and are renewed in faith and hope.

We place our hope in God.

We sing of a life beyond life

and a future good beyond imagining:

a new heaven and a new earth,

the end of sorrow, pain, and tears,

Christ’s return and life with God,

the making new of all things.

We yearn for the coming of that future,
even while participating in eternal life now.

Divine creation does not cease

until all things have found wholeness, union,
and integration

with the common ground of all being.

As children of the Timeless One,

our time-bound lives will find completion
in the all-embracing Creator.

In the meantime, we embrace the present,

embodying hope, loving our enemies,
caring for the earth,
choosing life.

Grateful for God's loving action,
we cannot keep from singing.
Creating and seeking relationship,
in awe and trust,
we witness to Holy Mystery who is Wholly Love.

Amen.

Note: If this Remit and either Remit 6A or Remit 6B are approved and enacted, then the foregoing sections 2.2.2 and 2.4 will be re-numbered as sections 2.2.3 and 2.5 respectively. If this Remit and both Remit 6A and Remit 6B are approved and enacted, then the foregoing sections 2.2.2 and 2.4 will be re-numbered as sections 2.2.4 and 2.6 respectively.