

The Baptismal Covenant

More than anything else in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, the Baptismal Covenant defines us as Episcopalian Christians (see pages 304-305).

The Baptismal Covenant asks eight questions. The first three address what we believe, and the answers are a recitation of the Apostles' Creed*. The next five questions address how we will live in the world as God's people, and they are quite comprehensive. The answer we give to these questions ("I will, with God's help") acknowledges that the promises are more than we could ever achieve on our own.

Do you believe in God?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

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 was crucified 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.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?

I will, with God's help.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News in God in Christ?

I will, with God's help.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

I will, with God's help.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

* There are two creeds, or statements of our basic beliefs about God, that are used in worship. The Apostles' Creed is the ancient creed of Baptism, and is used in daily worship and to recall the Baptismal Covenant. The Nicene Creed is the creed of the universal Church, and is used at the Eucharist.