

The Preamble

As a way of explaining what the Church stands for, every time an elder or minister is appointed, and at other important times too, this is read. It's a way of helping church members remember what the Church is about. It's a good, short description of what we think faith in Jesus is about.

“The Church of Scotland, as part of the holy catholic or universal Church, worshipping one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, affirms anew its belief in the Gospel of the sovereign grace and love of God, wherein through Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, incarnate, crucified, and risen, he freely offers to all, upon repentance and faith, the forgiveness of sins, renewal by the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, and calls them to labour in the fellowship of faith for the advancement of the kingdom of God throughout the world. The Church of Scotland acknowledges the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and life. The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith.”

The Church of Scotland is part of the Church round the world; all the followers of Jesus together. “Catholic” means “universal” and does not mean the Church of Scotland is a Roman Catholic Church (which, though the largest part, is only a part of the Church of Jesus).

The Church worships God who is Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit together are known as the Trinity.

This is what the Church understands the “Good News” (Gospel) of Jesus is. It is based on the love of God which is greater than anyone can control. Central to the Good News is that Jesus really lived, died and rose again.

Everyone who admits their life isn't the way God wants, and who wants to live God's way, can be sure their separation from God has been taken away, can be sure they have been given new spiritual life by God and be sure that they shall always belong to God for ever. These people have a job: to work for Jesus so that the Good News is made alive here and across the world so that other people come to know Jesus as Lord.

God's message is contained in the Bible, which is why we read it. It tells us what God is like, it tells us who Jesus is and why he came, and it tells us what principles to live by. Reading, understanding and living by the teaching of the Bible is very important.

There is another document, the Westminster Confession, which is an orderly account of the things some Christians believe. However, not all of it is now acceptable to many people in church, so only those parts which are at the core of the faith still apply. There is anyway a freedom to believe things which are not at the core of Christian faith.

The Vows

When you “join the Church” you are saying:-

- 1 that you believe and trust in God and accept his forgiveness and new life; and
- 2 that you promise to make your faith stronger and follow Jesus in the world.

The vows you take are these. You answer “I do” to each of them:

Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

If Jesus is a Saviour, we must need to be saved from something. We're saved from godlessness and distance from God which is called sin. We're also pardoned all the things we've done which are sinful. So Jesus is a Saviour. But he is also someone we trust and obey. So he is also Lord.

Do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's day?

Coming together regularly to worship is important service to God.

Do you promise to be faithful in reading the Bible and in prayer?

These are things we learn by doing, so there's no time like the present to start.

Do you promise to give a fitting proportion of your time, talents and money for the church's work in the world?

How much is Jesus, and sharing Jesus' values, worth to you?

Do you promise, depending on the grace of God, to confess Christ before all people, to serve him in your daily work, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?

Faith in Jesus isn't only for Sundays!
It's for all of life!

To join the church

- You must have been baptised, either as a child or as an adult. If you have not been baptised, you will need to be baptised.
- The Kirk Session must be satisfied that you have received instruction in what you are doing and that you are fit to be admitted to the Lord's Table (receive the Lord's Supper, or Communion).

When you join the church

- It is only a beginning, not the end!
- You are encouraged to make your faith deeper
- You are encouraged to get involved in working for God's kingdom
- You will be given a Standing Order and Gift Aid form or envelopes for your regular giving to God's work
- You are among friends who want to help you grow in faith, and who need your help to encourage them to grow and work together for God's kingdom.
- There are lots of things on in our church to help you grow in faith and express your faith in action. Be brave and come along. Be consistent and keep coming, even if it's strange and hard to start with.
- The Church of Jesus is about much more than just our congregation. So look out for other things and other people across the world who can help you grow in faith and whose work you might also support through your prayers, giving and involvement.

St Blane's and Lecropt
are congregations of
The Church of Scotland-
Serving all Scotland

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Joining the Church



Joining the Church is about two things:
1 following, trusting and loving God and Jesus; and
2 taking part in the things the Church does.

The most important part is the first part. It's important to come to faith in God, through Jesus. It's important to trust in Jesus and to be aware of the forgiving, making new and help he gives to people who trust him.

God wants people to love him and to follow his ways for living. God wants people to know that he loves them, that he forgives them, that he makes them new and that he gives them hope for life and good reasons to live for him.

The second part also matters. God wants people to get together and to work together not only to help their own faith, but to make a difference in the world. For all its faults, the Church is about making that difference in God's name.

Therefore joining the Church is first of all about faith. Then it's about the organisation. But it is all about God, and about our response of love to a God who loved us first.