

Garden City CHURCH

Essential Beliefs

We value diversity and the uniqueness of every individual, foregoing the need for uniformity. However, unity and harmony, centered around Jesus, are the top priorities of our church family. While we come from different backgrounds, our common beliefs draw us together toward Jesus. In essentials we have unity, in non-essentials we have liberty, in anti-essentials we have limits, in all things we have love. These essential faith affirmations shape the Jesus-centered faith and practice at the heart of Garden City Church.

// Living Word //

We believe in the divine inspiration of holy scripture and its centrality in all matters of faith and conduct. *Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character.* (2 Timothy 3:16 CEB) The dynamic, transforming power of the word of God guides the church through the life of each Christian. *God's word is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword.* (Heb. 4:12 CEB) As we read the living word, the living God challenges us and calls us to new life with Jesus in the kingdom of God. Not to be shaped by the word is to be shaped by the world.

// Liberty in Christ //

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. (Gal 5:1 NIV) Jesus not only frees us from, he frees us for. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us from birth are fractured and broken by sin. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus sets us free from the power sin, satan and death hold to condemn, control, and destroy us. Jesus also frees us for our original calling as God's image reflecting humans- reflecting God's love to the world and the world's love back to God. By looking to Jesus, we get to know God and see how God originally designed humans to be fully alive and free. *The Son reflects the glory of God and shows exactly what God is like.* (Hebrews 1:3 NCV) Followers of Jesus seek not only their own freedom, but also the liberation of others from the sins and oppressions in their lives. Liberty is not a private gift to be used selfishly, but is given to serve the community and the world out of love. *You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love.* (Galatians 5:13 CEB) United in Jesus, we offer freedom to one another to differ on issues of belief or practice where the bible and historical record seems to allow for a variety of interpretations. Our conviction of

freedom in Christ empowers us to focus on what unites us as followers of Christ, rather than on what divides us.

// Life by the Spirit //

We hold a Trinitarian understanding of one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The New Testament tells us the Holy Spirit works within individuals, the Church and the world. We believe the Holy Spirit instills a desire in our hearts to turn to Jesus, assures us that Christ dwells within us, enables our obedience to Jesus, conforms us to his image, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to see and join Jesus' mission in the world. *If we live by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit.* (Gal 5:25 CEB) The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to us as individuals and binds us together in unity for Christ's mission as Christ's body, the Church. *But you aren't self-centered. Instead you are in the Spirit, if in fact God's Spirit lives in you.* (Romans 8:9 CEB)

// New life with Jesus //

Humans are made fully alive through Jesus. Jesus said, *'I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.'* (John 10:10 CEB) New life in Christ happens when we commit our lives personally to him and receive forgiveness and acceptance. And yet this new life with Jesus is more than the experience of forgiveness and acceptance, and more than a way to escape hell when we die. It is the gift of eternal, new creation life here and now. *If anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation.* (2 Cor. 5:17 CEB) Growing to Christ-like maturity is a lifelong journey with Jesus. Every step of the journey Jesus is our teacher, healer, savior and friend. God transforms people for the purpose of transforming our world into a place of flourishing love, justice and beauty.

// Life Together //

The church is not an institution, organization, or building. It is a grace-filled, inclusive community of reconciled humans who participate in the joyous, hope-filled life and mission of Jesus Christ. The church gathered functions as an embassy of the kingdom of God and the church scattered functions as the ambassadors sent out on behalf of the Jesus nation to the people of all nations. It is a Spirit filled family of equals: as the New Testament teaches that within Christian community there is to be *neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:28 CEB).

// Lives of love //

Our restoration mission belongs to the whole church—women and men, young and old, church members and pastors. Every follower of Christ in the church is part of the common priesthood, stewarding the common good. The church's mission seeks to hold together proclamation and compassion, personal witness and restorative justice, service and stewardship in all areas of life. Our mission of love is shaped like Jesus. Jesus said, *As the father has sent me, so I send you.* (John 20:21 CEB)

Partnerships

We are strengthened by the Evangelical Covenant Church and Converge.

The Evangelical Covenant Church cultivates communities of worship committed to prayer, preaching, and study of the word; the celebration of baptism and communion; and relationships across gender, ethnicity, age, culture, and socioeconomic status. We equip loving, giving, growing Christians to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ—evangelizing the lost, ministering to those in need, and seeking justice for the oppressed. If you would like to learn more about the Evangelical Covenant Church, you can read the full version of the Covenant Affirmations [here](#) or visit the [Covenant website](#) for more information.

Converge is a movement of churches working to help people meet, know and follow Jesus. Converge does this by starting and strengthening churches.