

What do we believe about ... God?

hope good **followers** **communion** holy
Jesus **God** belief Christ
light love **Father**
wisdom thoughts **faith** worship eyes Son
triune ever-present **all-knowing** **all-powerful** **mysterious**
Holy Spirit care sustains



What do we believe about God?

God in Christ and creation

With the whole Christian Church, the United Reformed Church bases its belief about God on the experience of the earliest followers of Jesus. As Jews, they believed in one eternal God, who is holy and good, all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present. This God remains mysterious, set apart from creation, living in unapproachable light. God therefore can never be fully captured by our words, our thoughts or our imagination.

But we also believe that God has been made known to us. It is in the particular story of God's relationship with the people of Israel, which comes to us through what has been called 'the Old Testament', that God's nature and will is first revealed. For Christians, the clearest revelation of God's nature and will comes in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and this is made real in the Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

'God is revealed to be 'triune', one God in three persons.'

From this, we believe that God is revealed to be 'triune', one God in three persons. Known by many names, including Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this one, triune God is the one who creates, saves and sustains all things. In acknowledging God to be Trinity, we declare that God has been made known to us, but remains essentially



mysterious, beyond us, calling us to communion and fullness of life. This God who is known and yet not fully known, is the one whom we worship, the one to whom we witness, the one whom we seek to serve.

God's handiwork can be seen in the vastness and careful spacing of the stars and planets, in the beauty of the mountains and rivers, the warmth of the sun in day and the light of the moon at night. We can see God in the complexity of life on our planet earth as well as in the immense variety of living creatures and how they support life together in intricate ecosystems. God's wisdom and goodness are seen in creation, but this is most clearly seen by the eyes of faith. When nature seems harsh and cruel and there is pain and suffering, we trust that all remains held within God's understanding and care.

God in the Bible

We believe that the Bible records the most dependable account of God. Through it we continue to know God and learn about God's love, goodness and care for this world. We learn that God is personal, and relates to human beings through the Holy Spirit. We learn that God requires justice and righteousness, and God's holiness is offended by human injustice and wickedness.

'God is personal, and relates to human beings through the Holy Spirit.'

Nevertheless, God remains ready to forgive out of a steadfast love for human beings and despite our unwillingness to follow God's ways. God's

love is shown through the liberation of the Israelite people, the provision of food and land for them, and the demand that they build a just and fair, peaceful and loving society in accordance with God's own nature. Israel was to be a light to the nations, a witness to God's love and faithfulness.

The Bible also shows that God's love for the world caused God to enter the world and to share our human nature in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus taught God's ways of love and justice, and brought wholeness by healing the sick, feeding the hungry and raising the dead. He brought peace to the distressed, forgiveness to the guilty, and overcame sin and death by offering up his life for the world. We believe he was raised from the dead and this confirmed that he had bridged the gulf between human beings and God. This brought the possibility of eternal life for all. He then returned to God and now sits at the right hand of his Father as ruler over all. God then sent



the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus' ministry in and through his followers, the Church. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God's gracious rule over all things has begun. Under God's reign, human beings will flourish because all will love God and neighbour fully and creation will be restored to wholeness and peace. We believe that in the fullness of time God will renew and gather into one, all things in Christ. We wait in hope for the coming of this reign in all its fullness.

'God will renew and gather into one, all things in Christ.'

God in the Church

In the waiting time, God's people, the Church, are to signpost God's coming rule, to continue Jesus' ministry as we worship and serve God through offering care for everyone.

'God's people, the Church, are to signpost God's coming rule'

God's constant grace and faithfulness towards us, we believe, releases us to show God's love by welcoming and including all people in our worship and fellowship,

through striving for justice and peace, by supporting fair trade, by affirming God's call to Christian ministry and service in all those in whom it can be discerned, and by seeking to support God's good and fruitful creation graciously gifted to us. And so all our action in worship, witness and service, including the care and preservation of the natural environment working for justice and peace, welcoming all and rejecting none, is done to the glory of God.



This is one in a series of booklets about the United Reformed Church. The booklets can be read and downloaded at www.urc.org.uk/believe



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