

don't know what it is about driving with someone. Maybe it's because you are contained in the space; both physically within the car and mentally within the journey itself knowing there is time before the destination is reached. Or perhaps it's because there are enough distractions coupled with not having to look someone in the eye. Maybe it is a combination of all of these that makes you slightly more vulnerable to sharing about life.

I was driving him home recently when he started sharing about his work. Working in the Hospitality industry, for as long as I have known my friend, he has typically worked in a job 3-4 years. He will go in, build up the business and establish clientele, then predictably move on to the next challenge. He was sharing about different roles he'd been in and was recalling an online interview with a board of directors. "And then one of them asked me if I could quote back to them the 'core values' of the company verbatim. Idiots. Just because I can recite back their corporate made-up *rubbish* is in no way indicative of how well I know the place."

The Enduring Principles of the Community of Christ are sometimes referred to as our core values. The nine principles are introduced online as follows:

"Our Enduring Principles define the essence, heart, and soul of our faith community. They describe the personality of our church as expressed throughout the world." (Taken from the CofChrist.org website)

These principles emerged and were developed out of a joint experience of church members from all over the world. Over several meetings, across a couple of years, these faithful disciples of Community of Christ from numerous

ENDURING PRINCIPLES

God's revelation in Jesus Christ and continuing presence through the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by scripture, is the foundation of our faith, identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

We do our best to uphold these principles (values, concepts, themes) as a faithful response to our heritage and our continuing experience with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

GRACE AND GENEROSITY

- God's grace, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.
- Having received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.
- We offer all we are and have to God's purposes as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity.

SACREDNESS OF CREATION

- In the beginning, God created and called it all good.
- Spirit and material, seen and unseen, are related.
- Creation's power to create or destroy reminds us of our vulnerability in this life.
- God is still creating to fulfill divine purpose.
- We join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.

CONTINUING REVELATION

- Scripture is an inspired and indispensable witness of human response to God's revelation of divine nature.
- God graciously reveals divine will today as in the past.
- The Holy Spirit inspires and provides witness to divine truth.
- In humility, individually and in community, we prayerfully listen to understand God's will for our lives, the church, and creation more completely.

WORTH OF ALL PERSONS

- God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth.
- God wants all people to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.
- We seek to uphold and restore the worth of all people individually and in community, challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth.
- We join with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed.

ALL ARE CALLED

- God graciously gives people gifts and opportunities to do good and to share in God's purposes.
- Jesus Christ invites people to follow him by becoming disciples who share his life and ministry.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We respond faithfully, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to our best understanding of God's call.

national cultures, languages, as well as societal sub-cultures wrestled with questions about who we were as Community of Christ across the globe, as one body of Christ. We discussed at the same table, we ate together, we argued, we cried, we laughed and sang together. We spent time together in community. Asking one another questions such as “Who are we, the Community of Christ?” “What unites our global faith movement?” “How do we as a whole commit to Christ and his mission?” What was distilled from these numerous conversations was the essence of who we are, what makes us, what shapes us, what unites us – the Enduring Principles.

How remarkable it is to be part of a faith movement that has a multitude of languages using different words and phrases – yet each speaking the same way about Christ’s mission. How blessed we are with cultures differing across continents or even across cities, to live as disciples of Christ being guided by God’s spirit speaking to all of us in the here and now.

Yet my friend was right. Core values are not simply a list of ideals to be memorised by rote. Rather, as it was mentioned above, the Enduring Principles express the personality of the church and help us know who we are, or who we need to become. When a member is upset or discouraged, it is usually because an enduring principle has not been upheld for them. The Enduring Principles define how it ‘feels’ to be within this community at its best, no matter where it is around the world that you may find yourself. Because regardless of where you walk into a Community of Christ experience, the Enduring Principles create the atmosphere of what is occurring there.

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RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.
- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices.
- We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

PURSUIT OF PEACE (SHALOM)

- God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation.
- Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom (peace), reveals the meaning of God’s peace in all aspects of life.
- The vision of Zion is to promote God’s reign on earth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, through the leavening influence of just and peaceful communities.
- We courageously and generously share the peace of Jesus Christ with others.
- Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore peace (shalom) to creation.
- We celebrate God’s peace wherever it appears or is being pursued by people of good will.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

- Community of Christ is a diverse, international family of disciples, seekers, and congregations.
- Local and worldwide ministries are interdependent and important to the church’s mission.
- The church embraces diversity and unity through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- We seek agreement or common consent in important matters. If we cannot achieve agreement, we commit to ongoing dialogue and lovingly uphold our common faith in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church.
- We confess that our lack of agreement on certain matters is hurtful to some of God’s beloved children and creation.

BLESSINGS OF COMMUNITY

- The gospel of Jesus Christ is expressed best in community life where people become vulnerable to God’s grace and each other.
- True community includes compassion for and solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.
- True community upholds the worth of persons while providing a healthy alternative to self-centeredness, isolation, and conformity.
- Sacred community provides nurture and growth opportunities for all people, especially those who cannot fully care for themselves.
- We value our connections and share a strong sense of trust in and belonging with one another—even if we never have met.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We are called to create communities of Christ’s peace in our families and congregations and across villages, tribes, nations, and throughout creation.