

What We Believe

The SHPC community firmly believes that being a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ is about living. It involves being transformed by the Holy Spirit so that our behavior might reflect that of Jesus. We want to live like Him! At the same time, we also recognize that such living is firmly rooted in a set of commonly held beliefs. So as Presbyterians, we affirm the following...

God

All that has been and ever will be begins and ends with God, and while realizing that all definitions and explanations fall short, we embrace a Trinitarian understanding of God. God "the Father", the Source of all that is, became visibly incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, "God's Son," and abides within each one of us, working and moving by the power of the "Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19; John 14:6-9, 15-17, 16:7-15 and 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Humanity

Humanity exists in God's image, and by nature, people are communal co-creators with God. (Genesis 1:25, 28 and 2:18) As creation and not Creator, we are "less than" God, but still being wooed and called to participate in all that God is doing in the world. The invitation is simple but profound: to love God, and to love others. (Micah 6:8 and Matthew 22:37)

Sin

The crisis of humanity, or that which the church calls sin, is about our movement away from God and our limits as human beings, wanting to be like God ourselves, and thus disrupting the balance of creation. As a result, we men and women hide from our Creator, struggle in conflicted relationships, and abuse our environment. (Genesis 3:7-8; Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8)

Salvation

Salvation is about more than going to heaven when we die, but involves experiencing the Kingdom of Heaven here and now, in this life. With the coming of Jesus, the course of human history away from God was redirected so that we are now moving toward God's original intent for creation. This new gift of God's grace has the power to change not only our individual lives, but the life of our world. Each one of us is called to participate in bringing God's blessings back to creation! (Psalm 139:7; Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-9)

Scripture

The Bible is the authoritative Word of God, written by people inspired by God, and brought to life when engaged by the people of God. In reading Scripture for its more than literal meaning, humanity discovers eternal truths that guide and shape our life together. Our Reformed Tradition understands 2 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrews 4:12 to teach us that the Bible is authoritative when 1) it gives witness and points to Jesus Christ, 2) it is understood contextually, taking into account the location and context of the writer, and 3) it is regarded as a living document. It involves a consideration of the plain truth of the text, an interpretive method that takes into account other Scripture, a constant regard for the rule of love, and a great deal of study.

Worship

Worship is an activity of Christ-followers that takes place every minute of every day, and is about living life with Jesus. When the SHPC community comes together for corporate worship, we try to honor and experience the many different ways people seek to give God glory. We value hymns, traditional liturgies, and ancient symbols, while at the same time embrace contemporary choruses, spontaneous and informal prayer, and more current expressions of faith. Because we see God as the Source of all that is right and good, we do not paint bold lines between sacred and secular, and are willing to use anything and everything that points to the Divine nature. Above all, we want whatever we do to assist people to experience the amazing grace and love of the One we call God.

Fellowship

Community is critical to the life of the people of SHPC, and for this reason, we see the church as a screened-in porch, a porous community that is more spiritual and value-centered than religion-centered. Our goal is not to get people to think the way we think, but rather to see them as children of God with value and purpose, and to partner with them as we together strive to move closer to God's desires for us. As a community of faith, we strive to be authentic with one another, and are not afraid to be honest, vulnerable, and transparent. We are a congregation that enjoys being together, and that is one of the things that makes us a family.

Discipleship

Jesus did not just come to change our beliefs, but rather to alter our behavior. As we seek to model our lives after His, we learn to cultivate hearts that are broken by those things that break the heart of God. Fully-devoted Christ-followers seek to minister to the 'least of these' by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting those who are in prison. A Gospel that is not social, and that doesn't impact the way we care for others and our world, is not the Gospel. For this reason, we have two additional images of the church that are important to us. First, it is a garden, in that it is to be a place where people are enabled and encouraged to grow and mature. And second, it is an oasis, or watering hold, where people seeking to actively 'live out' their faith, can always return to find a safe place of encouragement, inspiration and renewal.

Outreach

SHPC is bold in its recognition that there is great diversity in the Christian community. We do not press for uniformity in non-essential areas, but rather embrace the paradoxes of our faith, and encourage people to humbly engage those whose beliefs differ from their own. We trust the living Word to offer guidance in our lives, but do not allow alternative understandings to create arrogant or divisive spirits, and always return to the great commandment to love God and one another. For this reason, we are continually seeking to reach out to the world around us, sharing what God has done in our lives through our faith in Jesus, and caring for everyone in His name.