

**Christian Believer** assumes that participants already are committed disciples of Jesus who have come together to seek better understanding of God and God's people. We will study the essence of the teaching that the **whole** Church has agreed upon and professed, as a way of knowing God better, and so living faithfully in communion with one another. **This thirty-week study of the classical doctrines of the Christian faith** aims at presenting, explaining, and interpreting **consensus** Christian doctrine as the basic teaching of the church, to the end that informed understanding leads to discipleship that is even more committed. **Facilitators will not be promoting or denouncing non-consensus views held by one group or another within the Church universal, other than to ensure that members have heard the full range of orthodox options.** It uses simple, clear, practical words that evoke Divine mystery without unnecessary human complexity.

**Christian Believer** emphasizes first divine grace that transforms our will so that we entrust our allegiance to God (known Biblically as "**faith**" or "**belief**"), then our mind and emotions. **Christian Believer** allows space for our questions, doubts, and dissent.

**Christian Believer** recognizes the Early-Church concept of **Accommodation**. Creedal statements are not absolute descriptions of divine reality, which is beyond human comprehension. Scripture & Creeds are **accommodated** to us in our human language (divinely inspired). To say that Christ is "truly God and truly human" means that Christ is neither solely divine, solely human, nor half-and-half. Christ is 100% of each. **How** this is so is a Divine Mystery. The Creed does not pretend to say. There's plenty of room for individual insight within the "tennis court lines" of orthodoxy! It is good to explore our understandings in a group for mutual support and to ensure that we are not accidentally thinking "out of bounds."

We will explore such questions as:

- 1) Did God use the Bible to create the People of God, or did God use inspired Individuals to create the Bible, which then created and shaped God's people, or did the Spirit via the Church create inspired authors who wrote inspired books? Or some combination? Where are Authority and Truth to be found? In Scripture? In the Creeds? In Church leaders?
- 2) How did the "Canon" (list of those Books considered divinely inspired for all future generations) come to be?
- 3) What role did spontaneous worship and church music play in divine revelation?
- 4) What were the circumstances of the 7 Ecumenical Councils & the Creeds they produced? Why were they called? Did they make up doctrine or quench the Spirit?
- 5) Can theology develop? Did the 20<sup>th</sup> century give us any new divine understanding?

Coming to faithful understanding of the teaching of Christianity through CHRISTIAN BELIEVER begins with disciplined daily reading of Scripture and of the writings of early and modern church leaders. The process of understanding continues in weekly group discussion about the relation of Scripture, beliefs, and daily living.

CHRISTIAN BELIEVER emphasizes the relationship of worship, belief, and daily life. The beliefs of the Christian community, taught within the Christian community, equip the Christian community for living faithfully and for **passing on** the faith entrusted to it.