

What we are as a Church

**One man's vision of who we are called to be, by John Yates
Rector of The Falls Church and original sponsor of Church of the Spirit**

We are Anglican in theological outlook —

- Rooted in the English Reformation doctrines of the 39 Articles, the early prayer books, Cranmer's homilies, and the confessions of our Anglican martyrs.
- Our Triune God has spoken supremely in our Lord Jesus Christ and in holy Scripture.
Our trust in God is rooted in the atoning life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and we look to the Holy Spirit as our ongoing Counselor, Guide, Equipper, and Friend.
- We accept the historic Episcopate model of church governance expecting bishops to be shepherds and teachers, assuring continuity of the apostolic faith and discipline, their ministries being rooted in the local church.
- We embrace our common heritage with the worldwide Anglican Communion, looking to this body as our primary, international family.

But we also see ourselves as:

Orthodox, in that we are rooted in the New Testament Church and in the creeds and the early councils, and see ourselves linked with the early Church as it has continued, uninterrupted, across the centuries.

Protestant in the company of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Luther, Calvin, etc., proclaiming a Gospel of Grace through faith in our Lord Jesus.

Evangelical in the tradition of Wesley, Whitfield, Newton [reaching out to those who are unsure of their faith]

Fundamental in our insistence on the truth of the fundamental doctrines as opposed to cultural assumptions which come and go.

Charismatic in our dependence upon the energy and life-giving gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic in our commitment to unity with both the early church as well as the orthodox family of believers around the world. Anglicanism is a vital part of the broader, ongoing worldwide Christian Church.

Sacramental in our belief that Christ is present and ministers to us in Holy Communion and Holy Baptism.

Biblical in our conviction that God inspired the authors of scripture – what they wrote was God's truth. The original documents were without error, the scriptures are infallible in what they teach about truth and practice. The Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation. They are our guide, our rule, our ultimate standard of faith.

I long for a church in which the following is true:

- We humbly cling to a unique savior and exclusive gospel in a pluralistic world; an authoritative Bible in a skeptical age; a sacrificial lifestyle in a consumer culture; a pure and chaste life in an era of permissiveness.
- We pray earnestly with humble confidence in the ongoing intercessory ministry of Christ our only mediator and advocate.
- We say the creeds without crossing our fingers.
- We trust in the reality of Heaven and Hell.
- We proclaim Jesus as the only hope of salvation, for all people, in all places, for all time. The work of God in Christ and the Word of God in scripture are complete – we add nothing to either.
- We believe that the local church can be the hope of the world.
- We are plain, simple, mere Christians.