

ST JOHN'S TUNBRIDGE WELLS

CORE CONVICTIONS & DISTINCTIVES

1) St John's is a Christian church.

Therefore, we affirm:

The supreme authority of the Bible.

God reveals himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word is inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. It is therefore to be submitted to, both individually and corporately, as it alone speaks as the final authority in every age, always fully sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

God's word is the sword of the Spirit: it is through Scripture — read, preached, and received — that the Holy Spirit works to convict, convert, and conform us to Christ. We therefore do not look to tongues or ecstatic utterances as vehicles of ongoing revelation, resting instead on the final and sufficient word of God.

The centrality of the penal, substitutionary death of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our only Priest and Mediator, who took our place on the cross and by his sacrificial death paid the price for all our sins, thereby fully satisfying the demands of the Father's justice and reconciling both us to God and God to us. Through his death alone, we gain full access to God. Therefore, confident of God's mercy and by an act of his free grace, we are accepted as righteous by faith alone for Christ's sake alone, apart from our good works. Nevertheless, a true and living faith in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings forth good works and a loving heart to obey his commandments.

The Bible's unchanging teaching on sexual purity.

Sexual intercourse and activity are only for marriage, which is defined as the public lifelong union of one man and one woman. In all other relationships the biblical norm is celibacy, and sexual relations outside of matrimony, so defined, are sinful in God's eyes.

A complementarian understanding and outworking of the relationships between men and women in family and church life.

We affirm that men and women are equal as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. We also affirm that God created male and female differently, in order for them to be complementary to each other.

This complementarity is especially to be seen in the marriage relationship, as defined above, and in the roles given to men and women in the family of the church.

Furthermore, within the church there is a divinely appointed order in which eldership/oversight roles are given to men only, not for the purpose of domination, but in order to protect and nourish the entire body of Christ. The ministry of men and women is equally valid, valuable and necessary in God's eyes, but the church must take care to study and to obey Scripture with regard to preserving the complementarity of roles.

The Bible's clear teaching on gender.

We affirm that all humanity is created in the image of God, either as male or female. We affirm that a person's sex, male or female, is fixed at his or her conception.

2) St John's is an Anglican church.

We are a Christian church grounded in an evangelical faith and practice, following the Anglican basis of church order and governance.

Therefore, we affirm:

The definition of the doctrine of the Church of England as set out in Canon A5: The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures.

Use of this document.

All those in leadership positions (staff, ministry coordinators, ministry apprentices, Growth Group leaders, PCC, and mission partners) are expected to affirm and uphold these convictions under section 1 and accept and respect those under section 2. Those in teaching positions are expected to teach in accordance with these convictions. The PCC will vote en bloc to reaffirm these convictions annually.