

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Christian formation is being formed into the image of Christ for the sake of the world.

“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when Christ is revealed we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.”

1 John 3:2

Below I have listed some of my beliefs about Christian formation. You need not agree with all of these in order to practice Christian formation, but these convictions have informed the materials presented here.

1. God wants to be in relationship with us. We were created to be in relationship with God. Christian formation is not about being told what to do as much as it is being reminded who we are called to be. Genesis 3:9 “The Lord called to the man and said, ‘Where are you?’”

2. Relationship takes effort. God is always reaching out to us, but like human relationships, there needs to be effort on both sides for a relationship to flourish. Relationships grow when both parties listen intentionally and share honestly. Relationships take attention, practice, and persistence. John 15:15 “I do not call you servants any longer . . . but I have called you friends.”

3. Relationships are supported in community. We do not come to Christ by ourselves, and we cannot remain faithful to Christ by ourselves. Christian community nurtures and encourages our formation. Our individual gifts, practice, and growth strengthen the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 “The gifts he gave were . . . to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

4. Christian formation is not an end in itself. We are not formed for our own sake, or even for the sake of the Church. We are formed so that we can be aligned with the Holy Spirit’s vision and call to work for wholeness in a broken world. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who reconciled himself to us through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

5. Christian formation is for all of us. It is for all ages, all people, all places on the spiritual journey. It is never too early to begin, and it is a life-long process. It is for our whole being: heart, soul, mind, and strength. Mark 12:30 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”