



# Community of Christ

## Latter-day Seekers

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **What does Community of Christ believe about the history of the Restoration?**

In Community of Christ, Restoration History is important to who we are. Our heritage and history shaped us into the unique faith movement we are today. At the same time, we do not ascribe to an idealized version of that history. We recognize that our history contains both good and bad dimensions. There are things we celebrate, and things we wish were not a part of our story. We seek to use all the tools and research at our disposal to explore and understand the entirety of our Restoration History. It is part of our sacred story and contributes to our understanding of Jesus Christ and our mission as followers of Jesus.

#### **What does priesthood look like in Community of Christ? Do members join the priesthood at certain times in their life? Can women have priesthood?**

Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world. Priesthood is not about self-aggrandizement; it is about serving others.

Priesthood offices in Community of Christ fall into two orders. Aaronic: deacon, teacher, priest, and Melchisedec: elder, high priest, evangelist, bishop, seventy, apostle, and president/prophet. The priesthood is “called” by divine revelation and prayerful discernment through congregation pastors ,or sometimes mid-level jurisdiction leadership. Some priesthood calls come from the general officers of the church (for example high priest, evangelist, bishop, seventy). The specific priesthood office is identified through discernment and observation of gifts and talents. If the individual accepts the call, the home congregation—or the jurisdiction level required for the specific call (mission center or world conference)—vote to sustain the call using the common consent process. The candidate completes classes before ordination.

There is no age requirement. The priesthood is not progressive. Generally, persons 18 and older may be called. Both men and women are represented in all priesthood offices.

#### **How does Community of Christ treat LGBTQIA+ members and friends?**

Community of Christ, in the Western Nations where the church is present, practices full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ members and friends and full access to all the sacraments of the church including ordination and marriage. The church recognizes that the journey to LGBTQIA+ inclusion is complex and the timing for one country isn’t necessarily safe or timely for another. The option for National Conferences were instituted in 2010 to provide an avenue to address this issue in

nation and culturally-specific settings. We believe all people are of worth and loved unconditionally by God.

### **How are minorities represented in Community of Christ?**

Minorities are represented throughout Community of Christ leadership. We have Apostles from all over the world (Africa, Tahiti, Wales, Honduras, Canada, etc.). We also have male and female leadership, including in the First Presidency. We diligently seek to hear all voices as we uphold the Worth of All Persons (EP) and the importance of Unity and Diversity (EP). [Enduring Principle]

Our hymnal, *Community of Christ Sings*, keeps us mindful of individuals and groups we may at times forget. One example is the hymn “For Everyone Born” which joyfully proclaims that all are welcome at Christ’s table.

### **What is the Temple used for? Is it open to the public?**

Community of Christ has two temples. The Kirtland Temple in Ohio is a historic site. Visitors are welcome to tour the temple and worships are occasionally held in the space. A spiritual formation center next to the Kirtland Temple offers opportunity for spiritual growth and development. The Independence Temple functions much the same as the Kirtland Temple. It is used for worship, education, and houses administrative offices. Special events and worship services take place in the temple throughout the year, for example, Christmas Advent service, congregational worship, and other special worship services. Every day at 1:00 p.m. Central Time the Prayer for Peace is offered in the temple sanctuary. From time to time the temple also hosts weekend workshops and special conferences, for example Health and Spirituality Workshop, and the Peace Colloquy.

Both temples are open to the public. There are no secret rooms reserved for special practices.

### **What are your scriptures? Is Your Book of Mormon the same as the LDS? Do you use the Inspired Version?**

We use the *Bible*, *Book of Mormon*, and *Doctrine and Covenants*. Our *Doctrine and Covenants* currently contains 165 sections.

Our *Book of Mormon* is basically the same as the LDS version; the numbering of paragraphs are assigned differently and some versions contain language updates to enhance readability and understanding, for example the Revised Authorized Version.

We use different translations of the *Bible* and uphold the New Revised Standard Version in our Community of Christ publications (one example, *Worship Helps*) and scholarly studies. This translation represents the work of several theologians informed by the best research and scholarly study available today. Our members are free to use other versions according to their needs, such as the Inspired Version, King James, and others.

### **The Inspired Version, Book of Moses, and Book of Abraham.**

The Inspired Version manuscript was held by Emma Smith. After the Reorganization in 1860, she made the manuscript available to Community of Christ, known at that time as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS). Two editors incorporated the inspired changes offered by Joseph Smith, Jr. into the King James text and published it in 1867. The LDS church regards the Community of Christ publication to be an accurate representation of material left by Joseph Smith, Jr. The *Book of Moses* contains material found in the Inspired Version manuscript.

According to most accounts, Joseph Smith, Jr. compiled an Egyptian alphabet and grammar based on his studies of the Egyptian language. When he acquired an Egyptian papyrus from a traveling exhibition, he translated the papyri as an academic exercise which became the *Book of Abraham*. Smith described the papyri in the *Times and Seasons* as “purporting to be the writings of Abraham.” Community of Christ has never considered the *Book of Abraham* to be an inspired writing. Scholars have been unable to connect the papyri writings with the *Book of Abraham* text.

### **Does Community of Christ believe that scripture is the inerrant word of God?**

In Community of Christ, we do not believe that scripture is the inerrant word of God. We believe that scripture tells the story of the human experience and encounter with God. The books contained in scripture speak in many voices and were written in diverse times and places. Scripture reflects the languages, cultures, and conditions under which they were written. God’s revelation through scripture does not come to us apart from the humanity of the writers, but in and through that humanity. Scripture provides divine guidance and inspired insight for life when responsibly interpreted and faithfully applied.

### **Do you believe Community of Christ is the One True Church?**

We do not believe any one church has all the answers. Therefore, we do not believe, as we did at one time in our history, that we are the one true church. We claim our “unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ.” (DC 161:1b) We seek to be a true and faithful reflection of God revealed through Jesus Christ and gain much insight in our association with other Christian faiths.

### **Do you believe in baptism for the dead? Celestial marriage?**

We do not practice baptism for the dead. We believe that baptism is a choice each person should make. We respect each person’s agency to choose whether they wish for baptism.

We do not practice celestial marriage, we believe in eternal life, and believe we are married for earthly life. Mark 12:25 “...rise from dead neither marry nor given in marriage, but as angels.” We trust in God’s boundless love and grace which always seeks to unite us, not separate us.