

Some things we don't teach or practice

In case you know about the following and were wondering....

Purgatory: We don't teach that there is such a place. We believe that when we die we will go to heaven or hell and God will decide that, based on our choice to accept his offer of forgiveness and acceptance while we were alive.

Speaking in tongues: We don't promote speaking in tongues as a key sign that you are a child of God. If you can speak in tongues, good, if you can't, it doesn't matter. We don't use it in public worship or in meetings, but don't mind if people use it in private devotions. We say your baptism gives you confidence that you are a child of God.

Indulgences: We don't practice this as presented in the 1500's where people were offered a certificate to say their sins were forgiven in exchange for money.

This raises the subject of the Church and money collected.

We believe any money given to the church organization is a **free will** offering. We recognize that the church organization would not survive without sufficient donations/ offerings.

Nor would it be able to do the humanitarian work and the spreading of the good news about Jesus Christ to others without such offerings.

The church organization is accountable to its general membership for how it uses its donations. Its paid staff are on fixed modest incomes, not on a percentage of any offerings.

Cellbacy: We don't believe that priests of female church workers have to be celibate (not marry) to engage in these roles. If such persons choose to not marry, that's OK too. We believe that people who devote part or all of their life to official church related positions have the rite to choose to marry, or not.

Papal Authority: We believe the head of the church organization does not have the right to make binding decision over the church and its members. In our church organization that type of power resides in a combination of priests and parishioners assembled in a convention, at which parishioners have 2/3rd of the voting power. The decisions made are also not "for all time", except for those things which are implied or taught in the Bible anyway.

God is our leader, the Bible is our Guide.

For further information:
Church Office, Phone: 8645 7972

St James Christian Community, Whyalla , SA

What we believe & teach, Saint / Sinner & Good Deeds.



Find us on the web: www.stjameswhyalla.org.au

Digging deeper into what we believe.

Assumptions in the context of this brochure :
A Saint is someone whom God has accepted into his family—the Christian family . This normally happens at Baptism.

A sinner is someone who **deliberately** thinks and develops those bad thoughts, or who does wrong intentionally or unintentionally in what they say or do.

We believe... We are saints...

Christians are saints because God declares their sins to be forgiven. This is only possible because Jesus Christ gave his life as “payment” for the penalty of all our sin.

This in turn is only possible because Jesus Christ is God, and so the life he gave up was a “God” life, not an imperfect human life. Hence Jesus’ life was a perfect life, given on our behalf.

Jesus was also truly human, and he lived a perfect human life which became the other part of the basis on which he could then as a fellow human, pay the price required. We receive this all purely as a gift from God.

The saintly declaration happens first at Baptism, and then in an ongoing way every time we confess our sins and ask God to forgive us. This is clearly demonstrated in worship, but that is not the only place in which it can happen on an ongoing basis.

We believe... We are saints who struggle with sin ...

Christians are saints who, although we are part of God’s family, still have to deal with temptations and doing wrong things.

Behind this challenge is the fact that God made us originally with the capacity to live perfect lives with each other and with God. But when Adam & Eve chose to disobey God’s guidelines in the Garden of Eden they lost the clear “Good” understanding and abilities, and gained a defective capacity to live in harmony with God and fellow humans.

Adam and Eve then handed down through their children a type of “genetic” nature that contained the defective qualities, not the perfect qualities. Hence the term “Original Sin” is used in Christian circles sometimes to describe the inherited vulnerability we all have to the problem of sin. When we do the actual sins, this defective nature shows its “fruit”.

We will only completely loose this imperfection in our life after death, when we go to live with God in Heaven.

In the mean time we are freed from the curse of sin and its foundation (original sin). The curse being the permanent separation from God which eventually means going to hell, and from doing wrong things and thinking incorrectly that the wrong things are OK.

We believe... Christians should do good things ...

Christians (or anyone) should not do good (generous, kind, helpful, compassionate etc) thing **so that can they can say** to God, “Look at these good things I’ve done, so please accept me because of the good deeds, or take some of the punishment off my account for the wrong I’ve done.” God accepts us and deals with our sin graciously as described already in this brochure.

Christians should and can do good deeds because it is part of who they are (Children of God) just as a fisherman goes and fishes and mends his nets or his fishing lines, depending on what he uses.

In doing “good works” God **will be pleased** about what Christians are doing because they are acting out their status as children of God.

Things like giving donations to worthy causes, or forgiving someone for doing something serious against you fits into this category of “good works”. But a Christian also does good works as far as God is concerned by being a good parent, or a good child, or by doing your vocation to the best of your ability, and so on.

Remember in all these things sin may pop up its unwelcome head. **But don’t despair** because God deals with sin graciously as stated in the previous two columns.