

# *The Confessional Banners of Christ Presbyterian Church*

*530 Tuscarawas Street West  
Canton, Ohio 44702*



*The First Banners Dedicated  
May 22, 2005  
The Belhar Banner Dedicated  
October 29, 2017*



## Table of Contents

Understanding the <i>Book of Confessions</i> .....	1
The Creation of the Banners .....	2
The Banner for:	
The Nicene Creed.....	3
The Apostles' Creed .....	5
The Scots Confession.....	7
The Heidelberg Catechism .....	9
The Second Helvetic Confession .....	11
The Westminster Confession.....	13
The Theological Declaration of Barmen .....	15
The Confession of 1967 .....	17
The Confession of Belhar.....	19
A Brief Statement of Faith .....	21
The Seal of the PC(USA) .....	23
Thanksgivings .....	25



These are the four women who primarily worked on creating our church's banners.

From left to right: JoAn Smith, Beth Pansino, Betsy Smith, and Judy Douglass.

Here they are pictured with the banner for the Brief Statement of Faith and this picture was taken in 2005.

## Understanding the *Book of Confessions*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the *Book of Confessions*. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers.

The creeds, confessions and catechisms of the *Book of Confessions* are both historical and contemporary. Each emerged in a particular time and place in response to a particular situation. Thus, each confessional document should be respected in its historical particularity; none should be altered to conform to current theological, ethical, or linguistic norms. The confessions are not confined to the past, however; they do not simply express what the church was, what it used to believe, and what it once resolved to do. The confessions address the church's current faith and life, declaring contemporary convictions and actions.

The creeds and confessions of this church arose in response to particular circumstances within the history of God's people. They claim the truth of the Gospel at those points where their authors perceived truth to be at risk. They are the result of prayer, thought, and experience within a living tradition. They appeal to the universal truth of the Gospel while expressing that truth within the social and cultural assumptions of their time. They affirm a common faith tradition, while also from time to time standing in tension with each other.

## The Creation of the Banners

When the *Book of Confessions* was adopted, Richard K. Avery, pastor, and Donald S. Marsh, choir director, of the Port Jervis, New York, Presbyterian Church devised eight banners symbolic of the confessions. The banners were made by members of the Port Jervis Church. The banner designs are copyrighted by Avery and Marshall.

A Brief Statement of Faith became part of the *Book of Confessions* in 1991, following its approval by the 203<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (1991). Gay M. Sorenson, member of the First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte, Florida, has devised a banner appropriate for use with A Brief Statement of Faith. It is included here by permission of the copyright holder.

The Confession of Belhar became part of the *Book of Confessions* in 2016, following its approval by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016). In September, 2017, the Westminster Sunday School class at Christ Presbyterian Church, Canton, Ohio studied and collaboratively created a banner reflective of the themes laid out in Belhar. Betsy Smith and Judy Douglass then saw the project through to its fruition and completion.

On the following pages, you will find pictures of the banners which hang in our sanctuary at Christ Presbyterian Church. On the facing pages of each banner, you will find a brief history of the confession, an explanation of the images that seek to summarize the confession, as well as a brief quotation from the confession itself.

The patterns for the banners which hang in our sanctuary were designed by artists in First Presbyterian Church of Port Jervis, New York; First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte, Florida; and Christ Presbyterian Church of Canton, Ohio. Our banners were lovingly crafted by members of Christ Presbyterian Church: Judy Douglass, Beth Pansino, JoAn Smith, and Betsy Smith.

*Soli Deo Gloria ~ To God's Glory Alone*



Constructed by Betsy Smith

## The Banner for the Nicene Creed

In 312, when Constantine won control of the Roman Empire, he attributed his victory to the intervention of Jesus Christ. One God, one Lord, one faith, one church, one empire, one emperor became his motto. He soon learned that “one faith and one church” were fractured by theological disputes across the land, so he called a council in Nicaea in 325 to draft a creed that would be commonly confessed by all Christians. The council met again in 381 in Constantinople to revise and expand that creed, resulting in what we now know as the Nicene Creed. It is the most ecumenical of the creeds.

THE CROSS WHICH IS ALSO A SWORD serves both as a symbol of Christ and also reminds of Emperor Constantine’s conversion story. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, while marching with his army, Constantine had a vision of the cross with the words, “In this sign you shall conquer.” The following night, he had a dream in which Christ explained to him that he should use the sign of the cross against his enemies; when he did, he was victorious and reportedly converted to Christianity. THE GREEN TRIANGLE WITH THREE SYMBOLS symbolize the doctrine of the Trinity, which is formalized in the Nicene Creed. THE HAND REACHING DOWN stands for God the Father, THE CHI RHO MONOGRAM reminds of the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ, used by Constantine on shields and helmets of his army, and THE DOVE reminds of the Holy Spirit. THE CROWNS stand for the rule and glory of God.

*“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father...”*





Constructed by Judy Douglass



## The Banner for the Apostles' Creed

Although not written by the apostles, this creed reflects the essence of early Christian beliefs and was repeated orally, along with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments to transmit the faith throughout the western church. There is no record of the use of this creed in Eastern Orthodoxy. Candidates for membership were asked to profess their faith by repeating this creed as they joined the church through baptism. Used in some form as early as 180, it continued to evolve attaining its present form by the 8th century.

THE SOMBER BROWN COLOR reminds of the difficulty and rigor of early Christianity under persecution; also, the monastic tradition. THE ANCHOR CROSS suggests security in Christ, as found in the apostles, some of whom were fishermen. THE FISH is an ancient symbol for the Christian faith, perhaps a secret code. Letters of the Greek word for fish can be used as first letters in the phrase, "Jesus Christ God's Son Savior." THE CHALICE reminds of the Lord's Supper, and thus the earnest and simple fellowship of the early church. THE UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS recalls the legend of Peter's martyrdom, in which he is said to have been crucified upside down because he thought himself unworthy of a death like his Master's.

*"I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen."*



Constructed by JoAn Smith

## The Banner for the Scots Confession

When the new Scottish Parliament declared Scotland a Protestant nation after winning bloody civil wars with Queen Mary's Catholic French-supported troops in 1560, it commissioned six clergy including John Knox to frame a confession of faith. John Knox had studied under Calvin and other Reformed theologians and sought to develop a statement consistent with the Reformed faith but relevant to Scotland. This confession includes bold language about the saving providence of God and God alone, the enduring nature of the church, the infallible Word of God, Jesus Christ as "our brother, our pastor, and the great bishop of our souls", and the "right administration" of the only two sacraments "instituted by the Lord Jesus:" Baptism and Communion.

THE BLUE OF THE SHIELD is the background color of the Church of Scotland. THE TARTAN X-SHAPED CROSS is a particular form called St. Andrew's cross, he being the apostle who brought the gospel to Scotland. The Hamilton clan tartan honors the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation, Patrick Hamilton. THE CELTIC CROSS is another ancient form associated with Christians of the British Isles. THE SHIP serves as a symbol for the Church. THE BIBLE AND THE SWORD, make reference to Ephesians, where the author calls the word of God "the sword of the Spirit;" the sharpness of John Knox's preaching of the Word was major power for reformation in Scotland. The Burning Bush which is Not Consumed Reminding us of Moses' Sinai experience, a symbol of God's presence and call.

*"We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom alone we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom alone we put our trust. Who is eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible; one in substance and yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."*



Constructed by Beth Pansino

## The Banner for the Heidelberg Catechism

Completed in 1562, this catechism, a confession framed as questions and answers, was commissioned by Frederick the Elector to be drafted by two men: Zacharias Ursinus, professor of theology, and Kaspar Olevianus, preacher to the city of Heidelberg. Its purpose was to develop a statement of belief that would be acceptable to both Lutherans and Reformers in Germany as tensions between the two groups had become intense. It received wide acclaim throughout Germany, Austria, Holland, Hungary, Scotland, Canada and the United States. This confession sought to emphasize common ground: belief in the Triune God, the Ten Commandments, salvation in Christ by grace alone, yet the language surrounding the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper remained distinctively Reformed.

THE REGAL RED AND GOLD serve as a tribute to the rule of Frederick III, who ordered the writing of the Catechism for followers of John Calvin in Germany. THE CROWN OF THORNS, THE "GERMAN" CROSS AND THE TABLETS serve as symbols of misery, redemption and thankfulness, the three basic themes of the Catechism. The tablets stand for the Ten Commandments, which appear in the Catechism where it teaches that obedience is the proper form of thankfulness. THE TWO LIGHTS AND THE FIRE remind of The Trinity, with the Hebrew name of God (YHWH) on the left orb, the Greek monogram for Jesus on the right orb, and the flame standing for the Holy Spirit. There is a long discussion of the Trinity in the Catechism.

*"What is your only comfort in life and in death?" "That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him."*



Constructed by Betsy Smith

## The Banner for the Second Helvetic Confession

Written in 1561 by Heinrich Bullinger, minister of the church in Zurich, Switzerland, as a well formulated pastoral legacy he intended to leave to the church of Zurich, this confession became public when used to defend Frederick the Elector in his heresy trial in Germany. After receiving the Heidelberg Catechism, Lutherans in Germany deemed it too reformed. This confession used more moderate and accommodating language, thereby exonerating Frederick in 1566. Meanwhile, Switzerland adopted the Second Helvetic as their confession of faith. It then received wide acceptance throughout Europe and beyond.

THE BLUE AND WHITE reminds of the heraldic colors of ancient Switzerland. THE CROSS is dominant on this banner because of the extensive discussion of salvation in the Confession. THE HAND THE BURNING HEART are traditional symbols for John Calvin, father of Presbyterianism in its Swiss homeland. THE LAMP symbolizes knowledge and discipline, two of the themes of the Helvetic which make it unique. THE SHEPHERD'S CROOK AND THE PASTURE allude to the pastoral ministry and flock's care for its own members. THE CHALICE AND THE WAVES recall the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism.

*"We therefore find fault with those who outside of Christ ask whether they are elected. And what has God decreed concerning them before all eternity? For the preaching of the Gospel is to be heard, and it is to be believed; and it is to be held as beyond doubt that if you believe and are in Christ, you are elected."*





Constructed by Judy Smith

## The Banner for the Westminster Confession

Distinctively English in tone and content, the Westminster Confession was commissioned in 1643 and concluded in 1649 by an assembly of 151 people: 30 members of Parliament, and “learned, godly, and judicious divines.” The assembly was commissioned by the English House of Commons for the purpose of “settling the government and liturgy of the Church of England (in a manner) most agreeable to God’s Holy Word.” Representing a systematic approach to Protestant thought that incorporates rationalism and scholasticism, it was brought to New England by the Puritans and adopted in 1729 as the confessional position of the newly organized Presbyterian synod in the colonies. The providence of God, authority of Scripture, and piety in worship are key themes of this faith statement.

THE THREE LONG PANELS AND THE CENTRAL TRIANGLE represent the Trinity. THE EYE recalls God’s providence and control of all life and history, a dominant theme of Westminster. THE CROWN, likewise, reminds of God’s Rule. THE OPEN BIBLE alludes to the authority of the written Word, basic to this Confession’s teachings. THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and refer to Christ and how his death for us is central to our faith.

*“God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.”*

*“What is the chief end of man?” “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”*



Constructed by Betsy Smith

## The Banner for the Theological Declaration of Barmen

Written in 1934 by a group of church leaders in Germany (including Karl Barth and Martin Niemöller) in defense of the Lordship of Christ over and against the tyranny of the state and its co-opting of the church, this declaration challenged the union of Christianity, nationalism, and militarism most German Christians took for granted. One hundred thirty-nine delegates, comprised of ordained ministers, church members and university professors, met in Gemarkte Church, Barmen, in the city of Wupperthal. The declaration proclaims boldly the church's freedom in Jesus Christ who is Lord of every area of life, thereby condemning the German Christian accommodation to the Nazi regime. The signers of this statement of faith did so at great risk to their reputations and very lives.

THE SWASTIKA CROSSED OUT AND THE CROSS RISING serves as a protest and witness against Nazi tyranny and any effort to take the role of God and control of the church. THE FIRE reminds of the suffering and death which follows from defense of the faith against tyranny, as for some of the Barmen signers, yet the cross survives such persecution and crisis of war, rising out of the flames.

*“As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so, in the same way and with the same seriousness he is also God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.*

*We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords-- areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.”*



Constructed by JoAn Smith

## The Banner for the Confession of 1967

In response to the turbulent decade of the 1960s, the United Presbyterian Church in the USA (UPCUSA), produced this statement of faith. In 1956, the General Assembly of the UPCUSA began to call for a revision to the Westminster Confession, seeking contemporary language and expressions of faith. A committee labored with this task for seven years. The next several years witnessed amendments, additions and changes, resulting in 90 percent of the presbyteries voting to approve the Confession of 1967 at the 179th General Assembly in 1967. The key Scripture of this confession is “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself . . .” (2 Corinthians 5:19), and it thematically proclaims the church’s faithful and active witness to the modern world.

THE BLUE, RED, AND GOLD COLORS recall the official seal of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. THE GOLDEN DOWN-REACHING HAND is repeated from the Nicene Banner and reminds of God’s providence. THE CROWN (similar to the one from the Westminster Banner) AND THE NAIL-SCARRED HAND recall the death and victory of Christ as he reconciles the world. THE FOUR HANDS OF DIFFERENT COLORS, THE CLASPED HANDS, AND THE GREEN CIRCLE remind us that the reconciled world stands at the foot of the cross and that God’s act of reconciliation is primary and serves as the theme of the Confession of 1967. THE STARS AND PLANETS ON THE BLUE BACKGROUND firmly orient the banner in the Space-age setting of this Confession.

*“[The suffering of Jesus Christ] makes the church sensitive to all the sufferings of mankind so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of men in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God’s judgment on man’s inhumanity to man and the awful consequences of its own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God’s renewal of man’s life in society and of God’s victory over all wrong.”*





Constructed by Judy Douglass and Betsy Smith



## The Banner for the Confession of Belhar

In response to the Dutch Reformed Church's support of the divisive policies known as Apartheid, the Dutch Reformed *Missionary* Church crafted the Confession of Belhar in the early 1980s. In 2016, the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly approved this confession as part of the *Book of Confessions*. Although it bears resemblance to some of the other confessions of the twentieth century, it stands out as the first confession of the global south. The major themes of the confession include unity, reconciliation, and justice.

THE PURPLE BACKGROUND suggests the royalty of Christ and reminds that Christ is at the foundation. THE AFRICAN CONTINENT is green to suggest life and God's continued sustenance and recalls the geographic origin of this confession. THE GOLD CROSS is rooted in South Africa and covers the African continent reminding us that reconciliation across geopolitical and cultural borders is only possible through Christ. THE BROKEN CHAINS serve as a reminder of former oppression and division that has been broken at the foot of the cross and that there is no longer any separation between peoples. THE BROKEN BREAD reminds us that we share one loaf, but that Christ's body which is broken for us and for our salvation. THE CHALICE AND PATEN draw to mind the former fencing of the table that was standard under apartheid, but in denouncing this division, Belhar affirms that communion is available for all. THE OPEN BIBLE AND TULIP recall the scriptural rootedness of the confession and two salient passages are highlighted. Then, the tulip suggests the five points of Calvinism, as well as serve to remind of the Dutch roots of the confession. THE INTERLINKING HANDS draw to mind both the Trinity and the reconciliation that is only possible through God.

*“We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another; that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; [and] that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin.”*



Constructed by Betsy Smith

## The Banner for the Brief Statement of Faith

In 1983, the Presbyterian Church (USA) was formed by the reunion of the UPCUSA and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, prompting a new declaration of faith, purposefully designed for use in worship. Issues of gender and ethnic equality and environmental justice emerge in this statement as it bears witness into culture. Adopted into use in 1991, it is the most contemporary of the faith statements in the Book of Confessions of the PC(USA).

THE CROSS has the colors of the rainbow in order to represent and celebrate unity with the diversity of cultures and races living in Christ. THE BLUE BACKGROUND symbolizes the universe as the light of the Word of God bringing us together. THE CRACKS ON THE EARTH recall our divisiveness and diversity, yet also remind us that our faith unites us with the one universal Church. THE SECURE HANDS OF GOD remind us that he who holds our world together in turmoil will unite us in grace of Jesus Christ. This is the foundation of our knowledge of God's sovereign love and our living together in the Holy Spirit. The seal of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Symbol of a Brief Statement of Faith The descending dove represents peace and the baptism of Christ. The open Bible symbolizes the Word of God. The Font recalls the Sacrament of Baptism, while the table recalls the Sacrament of Communion, and the pulpit, the preaching of the Word. The flames represent the burning bush and Pentecost. The overall image suggests the human figure with stretched out arms.

*"In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, 'Come, Lord Jesus!'"*



### **The Seal of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**


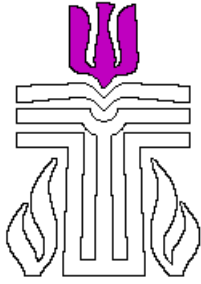
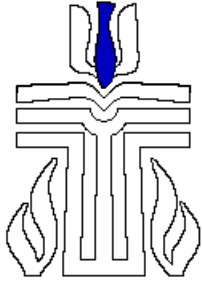

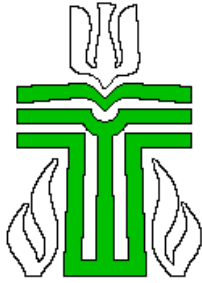
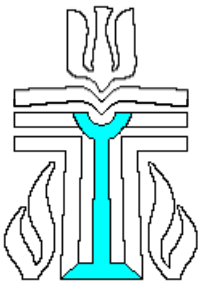

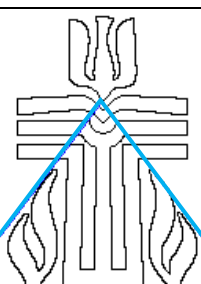
When the Presbyterian Church was reunited in 1983, a task force was formed to design a new seal that reflected the symbolism of the Presbyterian tradition. It was decided that the seal should be a mini-confession – a theological affirmation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

It was determined that the designers should work closely with the writers of “A Brief Statement of Faith,” and the designers of the banner. The result of that synergism shows the newly designed seal to be a prominent component of the banner.

All of the symbols associated with the seal can be found in other religions, in antiquity, and in secular culture. We rejoice that our faith makes common cause with God’s universal symbolic language. The following page features a diagram which highlights the various symbols of the seal.

The seal was designed by Malcolm Greer and Martha Goethals. It was formally adopted in 1985.

The symbols within the PC (USA) seal

 <p>The Cross</p>	 <p>The Dove</p>
 <p>The Fish</p>	 <p>The Book</p>
 <p>The Pulpit</p>	 <p>The Cup</p>
 <p>The Fire</p>	 <p>The Triangle</p>

The Confessional Banners, which hang in our sanctuary to honor and glorify God, and this accompanying booklet was a 2005 and 2017 project of the Worship Committee. We are grateful to Paul Knoch, Tom McCain, and Del Ring, members of the Property Committee, for their part in the design, building, and hanging of the racks on which the banners are displayed. Thanks are in order, as well, to Caryn Smith and Diane Nave in our CPC office for their work in the production of this booklet.

**Worship Ministry in 2005**

Gloria Atwell  
Lee DeGraaf  
Dave de Vries  
Judy Douglass  
David Kienzle  
Glenn Morckel  
Dave Morgan  
Jerry Norton  
Tom Okonak  
Beth Pansino  
Andy Roth  
Betsy Smith

**Worship Ministry in 2017**

Terri Bate  
Becky Banfield  
Kent Berg  
Mario Buchanan  
Judy Douglass  
Dave de Vries  
Roger Gray  
David Kienzle  
Don Montgomery  
Dave Morgan  
Joe Orin  
Beth Pansino  
Kathy Schlabach  
Michael Wallace  
Natalie Weinsz

The histories of the confessions as well as the explanation of the images in the banners were drawn and adapted from the Confessional Banners document from the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, MI. The quotations from the confessions themselves come from the *Book of Confessions*.