



## Our Basic Christian Beliefs

We believe that each person is called to work out his or her own theology based on the four basic authorities of scripture, religious experience, church tradition, and human reason. Each of these poles of authority must be balanced by the others so that for example, something experienced must fall within the boundaries of human reason, church tradition, and most important of all, Scripture, which we revere as the ultimate authority. We believe that God can only be known through fully experiencing God's mystery.

**GRACE:** God loves every person and continually seeks to forgive our failure to be obedient. This constant love and forgiveness is given freely. There is nothing we can do either to deserve or earn it. This activity of God's constant loving and forgiving of every person----- is God's grace.

**CHRIST:** A God of total love and forgiveness is a difficult if not impossible concept for us to understand. Therefore the great mystery we call God was fully revealed to us in the form of a man, Jesus of Nazareth.

**JUSTIFICATION by FAITH:** "We are justified, or pardoned, not by good works but by faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This means that when we fully have faith that Christ's death opened the way to wholeness and love, we are justified. Justification is being brought into a proper relationship with God and neighbor, fully understanding God's purpose for us, being freed from our obsession and self-interest, released from guilt for our inability to be obedient to God, and rescued from our anxiety about meaninglessness and death.



**HOLY SPIRIT:** God continues to be revealed to us today in many different ways, most of which are identified through experience rather than knowledge. Both the experienced presence of God in our lives and the assumed activity of God in history are identified as the Holy Spirit. God is a mystery and when this mystery touches our lives in some ways, we identify it as the activity of the Holy Spirit. This experimental, mystical, revelation of God has always been a characteristic affirmation of Methodists.