

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

*Article 1, EPCA Statement of Faith*

- I. Creator
- II. holy & perfect
- III. eternally existent
- IV. in three Persons
- V. having limitless knowledge and sovereign power
- VI. purposed to redeem a people for his own glory

**I. Creator**

- a. All three members of the trinity were involved. (Gen. 1:26)

*Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

i. Father - **1 Corinthians 8:6**

ii. Son - **Colossians 1:16**

iii. Holy Spirit - **Genesis 1:2**

- b. As Creator, God is the supreme authority over all creation/life.

i. God merely had to speak to create.  
**-Psalm 33:9**

ii. God created out of nothing. (*ex nihilo*)  
**-Hebrews 11:3**

## II. Perfect & Holy

a. The Bible describes God as having many attributes.

- Omnipotent \_\_\_\_\_ - all powerful (Rev. 19:6)
- Omnipresent \_\_\_\_\_ - everywhere at the same time (Ps. 139:7-12)
- Omniscient \_\_\_\_\_ - all knowing (Ps. 139:1-6)
- Sovereign \_\_\_\_\_ – in control (Eph. 1:11)
- Eternal \_\_\_\_\_ - without beginning or end (Ps. 90:2)
- Love \_\_\_\_\_ - sacrificially caring & adoring (1 John 4:8)
- Immutable \_\_\_\_\_ - unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)
- Holy \_\_\_\_\_ - absolutely separate (Is. 6:1-3)
- Righteous \_\_\_\_\_ - just, good, Divine (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Truth \_\_\_\_\_ - ultimate reality (John 14:6)

*Yet, only one attribute is repeated 3 times in a description of God:*

**Isaiah 6:1-5** – “...*Holy, holy, holy...*”

b. God's holiness:

- i. Is His most fundamental \_\_\_\_\_ attribute (because it...)
- ii. Is emphasized \_\_\_\_\_ more than any other in the Bible.
- iii. It affects \_\_\_\_\_ all of His other attributes.
- iv. It means that God is absolutely separate \_\_\_\_\_ from His creatures and from sin. (*holy=to be set apart*)

### III. Eternally Existent

#### a. “Eternally”

i. God has no beginning\_\_\_\_\_.

1. There never was a time when God was not\_\_\_\_\_.

2. God has always\_\_\_\_\_ existed.

**Psalm 90:2** – *“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”*

ii. God has no ending\_\_\_\_\_.

1. God will always\_\_\_\_\_ exist in the future.

iii. God’s eternal existence refers both to time\_\_\_\_\_ and to quality\_\_\_\_\_ of existence!

1. God fully lives in the eternal present.

2. In every way that God exists he exists perfectly and without limit.

#### b. “Existent”

i. The Bible assumes\_\_\_\_\_ the existence of God, so it does not try to prove his existence.

ii. Ultimately we may only accept the existence of God by faith\_\_\_\_\_.

**Hebrews 11:6** – *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

iii. The person who refuses to accept God’s existence is a fool\_\_\_\_\_.

**Psalm 14:1** – *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.”*

1. An atheist\_\_\_\_\_ is a person who denies God’s existence.

2. An agnostic\_\_\_\_\_ is a person who does not believe a person can know whether or not God exists.

**Though God's existence is ultimately accepted or rejected by faith there are many evidences that make this belief a reasonable one:**

**1. Creation**

**a.** Humanity knows that God exists because of the world around him.

**i.** Romans 1:18-23

Philosophers sometimes use these arguments for God's existence:

The Cosmological argument

*For every effect there is a cause.*

*The universe began; therefore the universe must have a cause, which is God, the uncaused Cause. (Genesis 1, Psalm 90:2; Hebrews 11:3)*

The Teleological argument

*When we see something that is designed we rightly assume that it was created by an intelligent designer. The more complicated something is, the more intelligent the designer must have been. The universe has incredible design and order so it must have been an intelligent Designer (God). (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20; Psalm 139:13-14; Job 38:4)*

The Kalam argument

*The existence of time requires a beginning as a reference point from which time proceeds. This reference point would have to be outside of time to begin time, that eternal reference point is God, who is outside of time but initiated time.*

**2. Conscience**

**a.** Humanity knows that God exists because of a moral standard within us.

**i.** Romans 2:14-16

**ii.** We all have an inborn sense of right and wrong, which indicates the existence of a just and supreme Law-Giver.

“Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it...[but] they do not in fact behave in that way.”

– C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Philosophers call this:

The Axiological argument

*Also known as “the argument from morality,” everyone regardless of his or her culture has an innate understanding of right and wrong (a conscience) given to us from God. When we argue that things are not the way they “ought” to be, we are not merely appealing to law, but God, the giver of the moral law. (Romans 2:15)*

### **3. Longing for Transcendence**

- a.** Humans have an urge to believe in and worship a “higher power” and desire a “something more.”
  - i.** Ecclesiastes 3:11
  - ii.** Humans desire life beyond death.
  - iii.** Humans desire meaning/purpose in life

Philosophers call this:

The Ontological argument

*Human beings, regardless of their culture or period in history, conceive a perfect being that is greater than they are—so great that no greater being can be conceived of. This perfect being is God. Since the human mind is only able to conceive of that which actually exists, God must exist because we would not be able to conceive of God unless there was God. (Exodus 3:14)*

### **4. Longing for Relationship**

- a.** Humans have many networks of relationships.
  - i.** This is by God’s design - Genesis 2:18
  - ii.** Many people feel incomplete or unfulfilled by themselves.

*The entire Bible speaks of this human desire to relate w/ one another within families, relate to the rest of creation, and relate to the Creator.*

**iii. Marriage, Families, Teams, Cities, and Nations are evidence of the incomplete nature of the solitary person.**

“Thus from the most intimate relationship (marriage) to those on the largest scale (national institutions) we find the same thing: we all know we are made to live together, but we all find that doing so is more difficult than we had imagined.”

-N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian*

**5. Pascal’s \_\_\_\_\_ wager**

*Our lives are a bet, and it is most reasonable to bet that there is a God. (Jeremiah 29:13-14a)*

*This belief is developed in the thoughts of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662). The argument is that life is a voyage toward or away from God we began that moment we were born. When it comes to believing in God, everything begins with a bet that everyone makes with his or her life. If you believe there is a God and you die to discover you are correct, then you win your bet. If you believe in God and then die, but there is no God, you have lost nothing, gained nothing, and simply come out even on your bet. This is a safe bet because you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. On the other hand, if you do not believe in God, you are making a very risky bet, because you have everything to lose and nothing to gain. If you do not believe in God and when you die you discover you were wrong, you literally have hell to pay. And if you do not believe in God and then die and God does not exist, then you have gained nothing, lost nothing, and simply come out even on your bet.*

“Either God is or he is not. But to which view shall we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun which will come down heads or tails. How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong...Yes, but you must wager. There is no choice, you are already committed...Let us weigh up the gain and the loss involved in calling heads that God exists. Let us assess the two cases: if you win you win everything, if you lose you lose nothing. Do not hesitate then; wager that he does exist.”

-Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*

**Therefore...**when someone says that they do not believe in God, the Bible says that this person has suppressed \_\_\_\_\_ the truth—they have denied that which they once knew to be true in their heart.

- Romans 1:18-32
- John 3:16-21

#### IV. In Three Persons

- a. There is one God.
  - i. Monotheism: belief in one God (Judaism, Islam, [in one sense Christianity]).
  - ii. Polytheism: belief in many gods (Ancient mythology, indigenous tribal religions)
  - iii. Pantheism: belief that God is in everything, the material world is itself divine (Christian Science, New Age, Hinduism, Native American, Scientology, Unity Church, *Star Wars*)
  - iv. Panentheism: belief that God exists in two forms—a present reality and a future possibility. God is part of or in creation so that creation is like God’s body and God is growing, maturing, and evolving from his current state to his potential state (Plato, G.W.F. Hegel, Alfred North Whitehead, & Marxist theology).
  - v. Deism: belief that God is not personally active in the world.
  - vi. Trinitarianism: the Biblical teaching that there is one God who exists as three equally divine persons: Father, Son, and Spirit.
- b. This one God exists in three persons (*only Christians believe this*).
  - i. The term “trinity” is not found in the Bible but the concept is biblical:
    1. Jesus is God.
      - a. Colossians 2:9.
    2. Father is God.
      - a. 1 Corinthians 8:6
    3. Holy Spirit is God.
      - a. Acts 5:3-4

**ii.** The Old Testament hints \_\_\_\_\_ that God exists as more than one person.

1. Genesis 1:26
2. Genesis 3:22
3. Isaiah 6:8

**iii.** The New Testament teaches \_\_\_\_\_ that God exists as three persons (trinity).

1. Matthew 28:19
2. 2 Corinthians 13:14
3. John 15:26

**iv.** Note these statements carefully:

1. God is one in essence (or being) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God is three in persons \_\_\_\_\_.
3. All three persons are equal \_\_\_\_\_ yet separate \_\_\_\_\_.

### **The Father**

#### **The Son**

(Who is sent from the Father and is obedient to him)

John 5:26 – *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself*

#### **The Holy Spirit**

(Who proceeds from the Father & the Son and bears witness to the Son, Jesus)

John 15:26 – *“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”*

## **V. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power**

**a.** God’s knowledge is infinite, perfect, and without limit.

- i.** God has perfect knowledge of all things, including the past, present, future, and everything actual or potential (Job 42:2; Psalm 139:1-6; 147:5; Job 40:13-14 46:10; John 21:17; Hebrews 4:13).

Because God knows everything:

1. Nothing can separate us from him (Romans 8:38-39)
2. Nothing can surprise him.
3. He personally knows and provides for all of our needs (Isaiah 40:12-14; Romans 8:32).

**b. Sovereign power**

- i.** God is able to do all that he wills (Jeremiah 32:17; Eph. 1:11; Romans 8:28; Eph. 3:20; Revelation 1:8)
  - 1.** This power guarantees and assures our salvation \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 1:16; 8:35-39; 1 Peter 1:17-21; 1 John 5:13).
- ii.** God is supreme \_\_\_\_\_ in rule and authority over all things, though he allows human freedom \_\_\_\_\_ as he wills (Genesis 50:20; Romans 1:18-32).
- iii.** God's sovereignty is a great comfort and security to the believer.
  - 1.** We can trust our good God to work out our seemingly impossible situations and trials for his glory and our eventual good (Genesis 18:14; Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 42:5; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Luke 1:37; Acts 17:24; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:1-17; 1 John 2:15-17).

**VI. God has purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory**

- a.** "Purposed from eternity to redeem a people for himself"
  - i.** God has foreknown, predestined, and elected all who are saved. (Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:11; Ephesians 3:10-11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8)
  - ii.** The object of redemption/salvation is God himself. (Exodus 7:16; Jeremiah 31:33)

*"God is the Gospel."* – John Piper

- b.** "To make all things new"
  - i.** God will both restore and newly create all things through Jesus Christ. (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:20-21; Rom. 8:19-21; Revelation 21-22)
- c.** "For His own glory"
  - i.** The ultimate purpose & object of all things is the glory of God. (Isa. 43:7; Jer. 13:11; Col. 1:19-23; Rev. 4:1, 5:9-14)