

An illustration of a stone archway made of textured, brownish-grey stones. A path of similar stones leads from the foreground through the arch into the distance. The arch is flanked by various flowers: purple and yellow daisies on the left, and pink lilies and purple flowers on the right. A branch with green leaves and yellow flowers hangs from the top left. The background is a bright, clear blue sky.

**An Introduction
to the
Sabbath Rest
Advent Church**

Published by:
Sabbath Rest Advent Church
Waldstraße 37
57520 Dickendorf
Germany

Telephone: 0 27 47/92 01-0
Telefax: 0 27 47/26 47

E-mail: sabbath@sabbath-rest-advent.org

CONTENTS

What is the Sabbath Rest Advent Church? 4

What are the Most Important Doctrines
of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church? 4

- The Relationship Between the Individual Person and God
- The Rebirth and Reformation
- The Character of God
- Sabbath Rest
- The Second Advent of Christ
- The Ten Commandments
- God is our Doctor
- Gospel Order
- Progressive Knowledge

What is the Goal of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church? 8

What is the Difference Between the
Sabbath Rest Advent Church and other Churches? 9

- Sabbath (Saturday) instead of Sunday
- A Healthy Lifestyle
- How Can I become a Member?
- Canvassing for Members
- Finances
- Forms of Worship

How does the Sabbath Rest Advent Church
Relate to other Churches? 11

What is the Sabbath Rest Advent Church?

It is a Christian church which has its spiritual roots in the Protestant tradition.

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church traces its beginnings back to the 1950's. At that time Pastor Frederic T. Wright began preaching in New Zealand and Australia.

Today the church is represented in more than 30 countries throughout the world, and has over 2,000 members. The church headquarters are situated in Dickendorf, a small village in the county of Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany.

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church believes that there is an inseparable connection between the spiritual welfare and the mental and physical well-being of humanity. Consequently, apart from preaching the Word, the work of the church also includes the prevention of mental and physical disease, care of the sick, and aiding in the restoration of health.

What are the Most Important Doctrines of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church?

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church considers the entire Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, as its creed.

We believe that the truths of the Bible have been revealed by God (see *2Timothy* 3:16), but are expressed in the language and the style of the respective writers. God Himself formulated the ten commandments, but the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in human language, is a union of both the divine and the human. The same union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of humanity. And so it can be said of the Bible, as it was said of Christ, that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." *John* 1:14.

The Relationship Between the Individual Person and God

For the members of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church, the relationship between the individual person and God is the most important relationship there is. We believe that through Christ every human being can have a personal relationship with God, without the necessity of a human priest as mediator (see *Hebrews* 8:1). Primarily, this relationship with God is maintained by personal worship, and secondarily by worship with fellow believers.

The Rebirth and Reformation

The Bible definition of “sin” is more than just an action or a failure to act, it is also a condition of dependence. “Everyone who sins is a slave to sin.” *John* 8:34. Sin is our second nature (see *Psalms* 51:5; *Romans* 3:9-12; 5:12), but we cannot change our nature by our own power. However, Christ came to this earth to die for everyone—to break this dependence in everyone who accepts His offer of deliverance (see *Romans* 6:3–11; *Ezekiel* 36:26,27). Through the personal acceptance of this by faith in Christ’s sacrifice, the second nature is eradicated and in its place a new nature, that is in harmony with God’s law, is received. This is termed “rebirth.” “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” *John* 3:3. But the rebirth experience is only the beginning of the Christian life. It needs to be followed by a life-long process of reformation of our first, human nature. The aim of rebirth and reformation is to become, in character, what Jesus was when He lived on this earth.

The Character of God

It is only as we have a right conception of God’s loving character that we can have a close, trusting relationship to Him. God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three Persons of the Godhead; and they are One in character. There is no difference between the God of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament. Jesus has shown us that God is not a destroyer, but a loving Father who both gives and maintains life. (“I and my Father are one.” *John* 10:30. “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” *John* 14:9.) Suffering and death are the unavoidable fruit of the transgression of the moral and natural law—they are never the work of God.

Sabbath Rest

Maintaining a personal connection with God means that we see God as the Source of life, ourselves as needy receivers, and Christ as the connecting link between the all-powerful God and the believer. God is our Burden Bearer, Problem Solver, Plan Maker, and Doctor. Of course, our diligent and intelligent cooperation is necessary, but when we cooperate with God, the main burden and responsibility lies with Him. The result of such a relationship is a deep and abiding peace. The Bible refers to this peace as Sabbath Rest (see *Hebrews* 4:9). The Sabbath is the divinely-given day of rest, and it is both a sign of this peace as well as being a means by which this experience can be gained.

The Second Advent of Christ

Jesus said to His disciples “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” *John* 14:3. Similarly, He spoke of the signs that would point to His soon coming (see *Matthew* 24). In fact, the imminent expectation of the second coming of Christ was a pillar of the early Christians’ hope. “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” *Revelation* 22:20. Whoever loves God will also look forward to seeing Him. That is why the hope of the soon return of Christ is a prominent belief of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church. This is an active hope (see *2Peter* 3:12), which means that we do not simply wait for this event to take place, but that we actually prepare for it. And our lives reveal where our real home is, and where our heart is.

The Ten Commandments

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church believes that the ten commandments (see *Exodus* 20) were not just given for the people of Israel, but that they are valid for all people throughout all ages. In short, comprehensive, and clear terms they describe our duty to our Creator as well as to our fellow humans. They are based on the fundamental principle of love. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” *Luke* 10:27 (see also

Deuteronomy 6:5 and *Leviticus* 19:18). “Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” *Romans* 13:10.

The first four commandments (see *Exodus* 20:3–11) describe our relationship to God and the service that He expects of us. Of course, God can accept only voluntary service (see *2Corinthians* 9:7). He has never forced anyone to give such service, and He never will (see *2Corinthians* 3:17). This means that the worship of God cannot be commanded or forced by any other person—neither by the state, nor a church, nor any other group, individual, or any combination of these.

The second part of the ten commandments (see *Exodus* 20:12–17) covers our relationship to one another. In order to maintain order within human society it is necessary to enforce obedience in this area. According to the will of God this responsibility lies with the authorities, that is, the state. But those who serve their neighbors in love do not need to be forced to do so—they naturally follow these commandments because of the love they bear for others. (See *Romans* 13:1–10.)

God is our Doctor

“I, the LORD, am your healer.” *Exodus* 15:26 (*New American Bible*). It is a comforting thought to the believers of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church that our Creator is also our Doctor. What does this mean practically? God has not only created us but He also keeps us alive moment by moment. Therefore, every healing can be ascribed to His working. In this work of healing, the human doctor is only the assistant. Faith in God and a personal relationship with Him is therefore a major factor in healing from sickness and the recovery of health.

During His public ministry Jesus spent much of his time healing the sick. Paul also took a doctor with him, namely Luke, the writer of the gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, as a companion. So too, the believers of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church desire to serve their neighbors in the areas of body, soul, and spirit, and to point them to Him who alone can heal—Jesus Christ.

Gospel Order

The organization of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church can be described as “gospel order.” In other words, Christ is the invisible but true Head of the church. All the members of the church are brothers and sisters, and have an equal standing. There is no hierarchy. Nobody can, or should, place anyone in an office, or remove them from an office. This is Christ’s work. Naturally, the body of believers has to understand Christ’s will, which means that each member needs to be personally led by the Spirit of God. Therefore, it rests with the church body to recognize and acknowledge the position of each worker, and to test and confirm every claim to an office, or the removal of a worker from an office, as they are convinced by the voice of God.

Progressive Knowledge

It is not possible for any confession of faith formulated by humanity to be final, because the knowledge of God’s work is continually progressing. That is why the Sabbath Rest Advent Church is open to any further knowledge that is in harmony with the word of God.

What is the Goal of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church?

The most important goal is preparation for Christ’s Second Advent. What does this mean in practice? The true character of God is to be revealed in loving service for others. Just as Christ gave a revelation of His heavenly Father, so the church desires to give a revelation of Christ to the world. In this way, Bible history is to be made a reality, something that can be grasped, and not just a dry theory. This is the means by which many of the questions concerning the nature of God, and His Son Jesus Christ, will be answered.

The members of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church also expect a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, through which God will make the gospel understandable to all people. “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.” *Joel 2:28*.

What is the Difference Between the Sabbath Rest Advent Church and other Churches?

The SRA Church does not place any value on stressing the differences between itself and other churches, its goal is much rather to preach a positive message. But there are some outward characteristics which differentiate the Sabbath Rest Advent Church from the members of other religious bodies.

Sabbath (Saturday) instead of Sunday

According to His word, God has given, and blessed, a certain day—the Sabbath—as an eternal institution, a divine day of rest. The Sabbath day points to Him as both the Creator and Redeemer. (See *Genesis* 2:3; *Exodus* 20:8-11; *Ezekiel* 20:12.) The Sabbath, as a day of rest, is anchored in the scriptural authority of God. It is part of the ten commandments, which God Himself formed. Sunday, as a day of rest, is based on the authority of the church. The question for the Sabbath Rest Advent Church is, should we not obey God more than human tradition?

A Healthy Lifestyle

The Bible teaches us that the body “is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” *1Corinthians* 6:19. That is why the members of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church strive to live a healthy as well as a morally pure way of life. Special emphasis is given to a healthy diet. In the case of clothing, the dignity of humanity, and of the sexes, as well as the health aspect is emphasized. In dealing with sickness and disease the main principle followed is to trust in God on the one hand, and to cooperate intelligently with Him on the other.

How Can I become a Member?

The intelligent and personal decision of each individual is the decisive factor in becoming a member. This is also the reason why only adults are baptized. When an individual has a personal experience

of the rebirth and recognizes the Sabbath Rest Advent Church as the church of God, they can confirm their conviction by baptism. The church considers it self-evident that each member remains such by the exercise of their own free will. Whoever wants to leave the church is free to do so at any time.

Canvassing for Members

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church does not force their faith onto anyone. Apart from that, less value is placed on the number of members than on forming character. That is the reason why the Sabbath Rest Advent Church does not canvass for members. Our duty is to preach the message of Christ: "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." *Mark 4:23*.

Finances

The church is financed exclusively by voluntary contributions, which is made up of tithes (a tenth of the income) and other gifts. There are no appeals for contributions, either to the general public or to our own members. In this respect the church leaders are dependent on God's working since they rely on God to move the hearts of people to make contributions.

Forms of Worship

While the Sabbath Rest Advent Church sees the importance of order in its assemblies for worship, there are no regulations concerning the exact order of events. Every kind of formalism is shunned. The services are simple in form and no use is made of crucifixes, incense, vestments, images or statues.

How does the Sabbath Rest Advent Church Relate to other Churches?

It is our duty to respect every form of religion and to meet those of another faith without bias or prejudice. Our understanding is that there are sincere people in all churches and religious groups who are seriously seeking for God and the truth.

To the question as to whether only those people who belong to the Sabbath Rest Advent Church will be saved, we give a resounding “No!” God judges people according to their faith and conscience. (See *Romans* 14.)

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church gives priority to each individual’s personal experience with God. The question of which church a person belongs to is secondary, because nobody will be saved through their connection to an institution, but only through their relationship with Christ. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” *Acts* 4:12.

We do however, judge other religions according to their doctrines. “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” *1Thessalonians* 5:21. The effect of these doctrines on practical life speaks for itself. “You will know them by their fruits.” *Matthew* 7:16.

Invitation

The services of the Sabbath Rest Advent Church are open to everyone who is interested in attending them. They take place regularly on Sabbath morning.

If you have any further questions we will be glad to answer them.

The Sabbath Rest Advent Church

If you are interested in finding out more about the Sabbath Rest Advent Church please contact: