

Statement of Faith

I believe that in the beginning there was the infinite, relational, loving, and just God who is revealed in scriptures as father and mother, and yet eclipses all understandings of gender and is thus rightly praised using all gendered and un-gendered language. God continues to create alongside God's creation, and humanity is invited to join in this ongoing creativity with all of creation as partner with, not an owner of, all that God has made. Care, honor, and respect should be given to this creation, which declares and reveals the handiwork of God, including partnership and honor to all people of any race, gender, cognitive or physical ability, and indigenous peoples. Out of love, God created and relationally walked in the gardens with creation. But humans, being tempted, sought to need nothing from God or each other, which led to separation between God and humans. Yet, even at this time, God revealed Godself as one who desires to redeem and receive any who might fall from the divine embrace of Trinitarian love.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who for our salvation submitted to being born of the Virgin Mary, fully human, fully divine. Christ proclaimed the good news of the forgiveness of sins for the oppressed and the oppressor alike, preaching in his earthly ministry of the love and justice that accompany a life lived in line with our created purpose and in communion with God. Christ was executed by earthly authorities who rightly saw his gospel as a threat to their power and wealth. In a mystery we do not fully comprehend, Christ's death conquered all sin and death, and Jesus' resurrection and ascension pave the way for those beloved by God to follow.

At his ascension, Jesus promised to return, ushering in the finality of God's kingdom. I believe that upon his return, evil will be burned away, the oppressed will be elevated, the powerful will be humbled, and a truly equitable ecology will be established between God, humans, and the rest of creation. This heaven-meets-earth moment will be the final return of right relationship between creator and creation, which God has promised to generations. This is not an immaterial future, but a perfected existence which will be physical and tangible as the saints are raised in perfected bodies, just as Christ modeled and promised.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, breath of life, advocate, and animator of our Christian vocation to make disciples of ourselves and others. This Spirit is God and joins Christ and Creator in a divine dance of unconditional love and inseparable communion. Through Christ's victorious resurrection, the Spirit invites God's beloved into this divine dance through grace, which is revealed and sealed in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. These sacraments are gifts to the Church, drawing us together and inspiring our worshipful response.

I believe that the Bible is the Word of God and should be studied critically, with attention to historical context and reception. While the Scriptures are the most complete revelation of God available to the modern Christian, God also chooses to reveal Godself through personal and corporate practices of prayer, the proclamation of the word, and through creation.

I believe that the Christian life to which the beloved of God are drawn is a diverse array of nuanced experiences of relationship with God and with others. In both relationships, scripture calls us to love, but acts of love are not one-size-fits-all, thus no relationship can be one-size-fits-all. I see my ministerial role to be pointing God's people toward the unconditional love of God, spiritual disciplines which might attune us to receiving and ingraining that love, and sacramental acts of grace which signify and seal the grace of Jesus Christ in our souls and communities—not enforcing my own interpretation or understanding indiscriminately. Creativity and imagination are required of God's beloved as we seek to join the work God is already doing to shower redemptive love and justice over all creation. I believe that intentional practices of faith formation and tolerance toward these diverse expressions of the Christian life are both essential in maintaining a faithful Christian community and being the Church of God.