

**Statement of Faith**  
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I believe that God is love. God's love is expressed through the Triune Being, Creator Son and Holy Spirit, who created the world, breathing life and breath into all living things. God's design for unity in diversity is witnessed in God's being. God exists, as Creator, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one, equal in substance and nature, and working perfectly together to achieve the purposes of God.

I believe that all people are created in the image of God and it is my privilege, and the privilege of all humanity, to reflect God's story and sing God's song: a melody rich with sounds of love, liberation and justice. History reveals, however, that people reject God's song of love and liberation and create melodies, characterized by dissonant chords of sin, evil, injustice and oppression, that long for resolution. Without God's intervention the beauty of life would be drowned in the dirge of death. Yet, because of God's love, God intervened in humanity's brokenness, sending Jesus, the Christ, who pitched his tent and dwelt among us.

Full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus proclaimed the Good News of God, embodying the Word he preached. He came proclaiming "good news to the poor, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed" (Luke 4). Jesus crossed boundaries and called for "justice to flow down like waters and righteousness as an ever-flowing stream." Those who benefited from the exploitation of others held tightly to the systems and structures in place. They were offended by Jesus' boundary-breaking work and led him to be crucified. But death was not the final word in God's song of life. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead, demonstrating that darkness cannot put out light. The crucified Jesus was raised to life. He established the church, and through the power of the Holy Spirit believers are called to continue the boundary-breaking ministry Jesus began.

Baptized believers are called to "re-present" Jesus in the world, to serve as the "incarnate Christ," to be "love with skin on it." Love is justice in the public square, which means the church is called to confront the principalities and powers that create poverty, distort the vision and oppress the human family. By the power of the Holy Spirit, followers of Jesus are called to be agents of transformation, bringing God's kingdom reign to reality. God's kingdom is not just a place you go to but a place you come from. It is literal and figurative. It is the place where love and compassion, peace and justice abound, a place where "the wolf lives with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together. ..." (Isaiah 11:6). Being agents of transformation is challenging, however it is possible as the Holy Spirit anoints and sends the church out to transform the world. Through the work of the Spirit, God takes the jangling discords of life and creates a symphony of hope as members of the church bear witness to Christ, uniting people with God and each other.

The Holy Bible serves as the unique and authoritative witness for members of the church who are called to worship God. Worship is a lifestyle experienced not only when the church gathers to sing, pray, study, share fellowship and hear the Word preached, but perhaps more importantly, when the church is disbursed to be salt and light in God's world.

The sacraments practiced by the church underscore the covenant God makes with humanity through Jesus. Communion and baptism are visible signs of the grace God infers to believers, young and old. Baptism marks our initiation into the family of God and the new life made possible through Jesus Christ who forgives, restores, renews and reinvigorates believers for ministry in the church and the world. In

Holy Communion, the church is reminded of God's nurturing presence with us and our connection with other believers. As the Communion bread is broken and the wine poured out, believers are reminded of how Jesus broke and poured his life out for others. In his name, we are called to do no less.

I believe that one day the kingdom of God will be established on Earth and we shall see Jesus as he is in all of his glory. In the meantime, I see glimpses of God's kingdom breaking through on Earth, stirring God's people on to love and to perform good works in anticipation of the eternity of peace, love and joy God promises to bring through Jesus Christ.