

Statement of Faith

I believe God loved us all before we knew, while we were yet sinners, and loves the world even in our brokenness and stubborn resistance. God has loved the world since before creation, and still God yearns for the world to be whole. Prophets, poets, and preachers have told us about this wholeness which God desires, even though we have not yet seen it clearly.

God has been providing for the world, nourishing it, tending it, and rescuing it in many ways over time. In Jesus, God's anointed and crucified Christ, whom God called son, we have experienced most clearly God's rescue and salvation of the world. We know Jesus through the witness of scripture, the testimony of God's people, and the resurrected presence of Jesus in our midst. Through Jesus, we have learned more of God than we ever knew. We see God's work more clearly, we know God's means and methods in the world more fully, and we feel the depth of God's devotion and passionate commitment to the salvation of the world. Thus, we follow this Jesus as our Lord and as God's salvation.

God's spirit hovered over the depths before creation and still blows like the wind through the world today. In this spirit, we live and we move; all of our being is in God's spirit. We do not always know where this wind takes us, but we trust in God who sustains us through God's breath.

Because God is always present with and among us, we have known God in many ways. Writings of the past have so often proved instructional and inspirational for the ways in which we live our life with God. Scripture has so often empowered us to faithful life that we rightly turn to these writings as the best written source for knowing God. Scripture does not contain or limit God, but directs us and challenges us to know God more fully, the same God who authors faith in every generation and who writes our faith in our hearts. Scripture provides us with an ongoing chorus of witnesses to the undying experience of faithful living, as well as a wealth of examples about how to live such faith in specific situations.

God's love for the world was visible in creation and is active in the world today. God has plans and visions for the world that have not yet come into full expression. The church witnesses to these visions, to provide an example to the world for the life that God desires for all, and to work to embody these plans in our own lives and in the lives of our communities. God's work is the salvation of the world and the bringing of all life to fullness; God invites and challenges the church to join the work as model and agent.

Mission shapes the church's life, and the church sings out in grateful and joyous response to God's vision and call. Throughout history, the church has found many forms of worship to express its joy, such as countless varieties of song and proclamation. The church has called sacraments two of its experiences that best embody our faithful life with God: baptism and eucharist. In baptism, the church recognizes the newness of life to which God calls us, and we celebrate this with commitments to turn our life to the path that Jesus has shown us. We receive the spirit anew and find ourselves being propelled into repentant lives, not alone but in community with Jesus and the church. In eucharist or communion, we know God's nourishing provision for us, and we remember the sacrificial commitment of God to the salvation of the world. We gather around one table, in the knowledge that God invites all the world to this celebration of salvation.

Together as the church, Christians trust in God to carry us into the future, even when we do not see clearly what happens next. We trust God's faithfulness and commitment. We believe that God has provided us with good gifts in this life already, that God is sharing with us a vision of the world toward which we can live, and that God prepares more good gifts for us than our eyes have seen.