

**Statement of Faith**

I believe that I am a rescued sinner because of the person and work of Jesus Christ, as brought to my attention by the power of the Holy Spirit, by the grace and mercy of God the Father. Embracing the mystery of the Trinity, I worship the one true God who is both three persons and one substance. God is the creator of all things created, both visible and invisible. It is by the atoning work of Jesus Christ that I stand forgiven and redeemed. I was once dead, but now am alive.

Jesus Christ, who is both fully divine and fully human, the only Son of God the Father, conceived by Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, stood sinless and voluntarily took all sin upon himself. Dying on the cross and descending into hell, Christ put death to death for all of creation. Death no longer has the final word, but the victory belongs to Christ alone. After three days Christ was raised to life, and ascended to the side of the Father. With the resurrection of Christ, my new life was born, and was hidden in Christ himself. I no longer stand condemned, but have been called a child of God. I am no longer a slave to sin, but instead have been adopted as an heir of the King. I did nothing to earn this. I have done nothing to maintain this standing, but instead am upheld by a grace that is scandalous, and makes no sense outside of the mercy of God alone. The sheer fact of my understanding this reality is the work of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, who was sent by the Father and the Son. It was the Holy Spirit who quickened my heart and mind and drew me to God

and God's reconciling work in the world. I believe this act to best be understood as election.

My election was not to simply enjoy the benefits of this relationship, but instead to live an empowered life of being a witness. This life I now live is by the power of the Holy Spirit which enables faith and obedience, and therefore sends me out to bear witness to what God has done. I am not alone in this sent-ness, but rather am dependent on the fellowship of the saints, the gathered church, the body of Christ, which exists to glorify God by equipping His people and sending them into the world. The Church, Christ's body gathered by God, stands as a light in the darkness, as a witness to a hope that is greater than sin, the love of God for His creation.

The Church, the gathered people of God, accomplishes this task by celebrating the sacraments which feed us, by sitting under the authority of scripture as the revelation of God, and by being the foretaste of the Kingdom which is here and yet to come. The sacraments are means of grace that God has established for the care of God's church. The meal nourishes believers and sends them to rehearse the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in their own lives and contexts. In a similar manner, baptism reminds us that God sustains God's covenant and sees fit to include God's church for the building up and encouraging of one another. I have always loved the beauty of a congregations practice- coming forward for communion and verbally committing to sharing in the faith of the newly baptized. The holy scriptures, both

the Old and New Testaments, are given by God to humanity for the renewal of our minds and hearts. The scriptures both reveal our sinful natures, and point us to the grace of God in Christ crucified. This revelation is led, overseen, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Church, Christ's body gathered by God, is a very real forerunner, re-enacting the Gospel each week by gathering broken sinners, announcing the forgiveness and mercy of God, and equipping the saints to bear witness to God's work in the world. I believe in the priesthood of all believers and that congregations becomes the local of this priesthood to gather and then scatter. However, this work of being the church is a very human endeavor, therefore we are reformed and forever reforming unto more and more faithfulness.