

Statement of Faith  
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I believe that in the Bible God reveals himself through the story of his actions, character and love for us, recorded by faithful people at different times and in different ways. Through it and prayer we are able to know God. The Bible is timeless in its scope, teaching and guiding us today as much as it did thousands of years ago, and it provides us so much: strength, comfort, instruction, conviction. It is true, and I want to obey it better. But we have to understand it as well as we can, in its literary, historical and cultural context. I'm thankful to have reliable scholars who help me interpret it: preachers, translators and commentators.

I believe that in Jesus Christ, God has called together many people from all times and places to be his Church. It is one entity, loved by God, and empowered and unified by the Holy Spirit, to spread God's word and salvation to people everywhere. We also gather in smaller, local congregations, called "church," in order to worship God, encourage and hold one another accountable, and proclaim God's saving grace to our communities. I cannot remember a time that I have not been a member of the Church and a local church.

Through my understanding of the Bible and my various experiences with "church," I have formed my beliefs. I love the creeds of the church, especially the Nicene and the PCUSA Brief Statement of Faith. But so that you may hear it in my own voice, I offer the following statement of faith:

I believe in God, the creator of all we know, who is perfect, holy and just. God is spirit, infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing. He holds everything in his hands and sustains all life by his word. He is patient and loving toward all he made, putting up with our sins for a long time, giving us time to repent and follow his ways.

God created people in the beginning of time, and all was well, God and people living in perfect harmony and fellowship. But when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, by their reckless act of disobedience and trying to "be like God," any hope for that kind of peace with God was lost for all people, who can never be right in all our thoughts, words and actions.

So God has been at work redeeming his people ever since. His ultimate act of salvation came in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. He is God's Son, come to earth at just the right time in history to fulfill prophecy and save us from our sin. He was born of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life, showing us who God is and what life with God is like. He grew up and ministered to many people, healing them, feeding them, including them, teaching them, casting out demons, and raising some from the dead. At the end of his life, he was crucified, as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. After three days in the grave, Jesus rose again, and even though we cannot see him, he is alive forevermore with God in Heaven. The resurrection proves his divinity, and it is our hope that we will live eternally, even though we die.

Once and for all Jesus ended our hopelessness before God. Now, if we only believe in him and receive his gracious gift, we are forgiven and have great hope for a wonderful, eternal life with God. He alone is the light and savior of the world, our source of true life. Thanks be to God!

After Jesus ascended into Heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit, as Jesus promised his disciples he would, who is also God from the beginning of time. The Holy Spirit has many roles in our lives. He convicts us of sin, protects us, reminds us of Jesus' teaching, empowers us to live holy lives, encourages us to love and good deeds and comforts us. He is God in us and around us.

When our God-given faith prompts us to believe in God in his trinity, and in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, we have an opportunity to show the world we are his followers, through the sacrament of baptism. In baptism, God's people are joined with Christ in his death, and rise out of the water cleansed and new. Jesus told his disciples to make more disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe in infant and believer baptism, and when we are baptized, at any age, it is a sign and entrance into God's own family.

The second sacrament that Jesus instituted for us is the Lord's Supper. When we participate in communion, we are spiritually fed on Christ's body and blood, we are in communion with him and all other believers, we remember his death and resurrection, and look forward to his second coming.

God is a gracious, loving God. He has provided for our spiritual growth through worship and these sacraments; the study and meditation of the Bible; the serious study of his own dear Son, Jesus, the life he led and the way he died; by prayer; and by fellowship with other Christians. I cannot account for all that I believe or why; there are mysteries of God that I must believe by faith. Neither can I state all of my beliefs in this short statement. And I know that I am not the person God wants me to be; in spite of what I say I believe, my life doesn't always reflect it. But I also know I'm on a journey toward God; for whatever reason, he chose me to believe in him and in his Son, and I thank him for it and pray that I will be given the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that I may know Christ better.