

## **Statement of Faith – Tom Sutherland**

God of heaven and earth, you are the one, true, living God. But you are more than we can imagine or understand. You spoke and all creation came into being. You breathed and it came to life. You are beyond all attempts to limit or contain you.

All knowledge and wisdom come from you. In your Word you reveal yourself and by your Spirit we know you. In truth and mystery you are the Triune God, one God in three persons-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our ability to understand is limited but your Word is reliable. It contains all that is needed for our salvation and for kingdom life.

God of creation, what you made was good. In your image you made us and you desired communion with us. You offered this freely, to be accepted or rejected. Like a loving parent, you asked for but did not require obedience. Adam and Eve, by their own choice, turned away from your wisdom and fellowship. In that act of rebellion they became sinful by nature. No longer was their sin an isolated incident. It became an attitude and condition of all humankind with no way out by human power. But you were not willing for your people to remain in sin and without hope.

So you reached down to touch humankind. From all the nations of the earth, you chose Abraham and his descendants to be your people. Under the covenant of the Law you blessed them and made them multiply. In return you asked that they follow the commands to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” Your people were far from perfect-like us they were often impatient and unfaithful. But in patience you mercifully dealt with them. Through your prophets you pointed toward a new covenant of grace.

Father, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy you sent your only son Jesus (Emmanuel/God with us) to save and heal a broken world. In Jesus-fully human/fully divine- your own self is most perfectly revealed. Jesus taught, forgave sins, healed the sick and performed miracles. His reward, from his own people, was rejection, persecution, and death on a cross. But Jesus defeated sin and death. He arose from the grave, ascended into heaven and intercedes for us there. In love and obedience to the Father, Jesus willingly suffered and paid the price to redeem us from our sin and its penalty. Jesus did for us what we could not do. By faith in him we are saved. In his resurrection we have eternal life.

God, you created us, know us, love us, call us, forgive us, redeem and transform us. By the power of the Spirit and sacraments, we are marked and sealed as your own. In baptism we are grafted into Christ and welcomed into his church. At the Lord’s Table we are reconciled with you and one another. You nourish us from the cup and the bread. Gracious God of love, mercy and hope, we desire to live in and for you. Remake us in your image, purify us by your righteousness, fill us with your Spirit and lead us joyfully into your mission.

