

A Statement of Faith
Rev. Jon Nelson

I believe with all of my heart, mind, and soul in one God, one in substance, yet revealed in Scripture as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son proceeds eternally from the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. Only in function and relationship do they differ, yet all three are present in the one eternal Godhead.

By this one God, all things were created and without whose will nothing is possible. The power and majesty of God are evident in the wonders of creation. However, it is through the written Word, the living Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit that the purest experience of God's love, grace, mercy and justice has been revealed to humankind.

In the image of God, humankind was created. However, wanting equality with God, humankind turned away from God and allowed sin into their lives. Like a virus, sin quickly spread into every facet of our existence and continues to enslave humankind.

Because God loved humankind and willed our return, God sent his only begotten Son to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Completely God and completely human, Jesus Christ was the Son incarnate. Born of a virgin, Mary, Jesus lived as God among us, healing men and women, adults and children, physically and spiritually, and teaching us the will and ways of God. Because Jesus chose to obey the Father's will completely, Jesus submitted himself to unjust trial, ridicule, and torture by gentile and Jewish authorities. He was hung on a cross where he died. He was placed in a tomb and on the third day after his death, he was resurrected. He appeared to his followers several times after the resurrection before ascending to the right hand of God where we now await his final coming.

On the cross, Christ took the burden of our sins upon himself. For God knew that our sin was too great of a barrier for us to overcome, so his Son sacrificed himself in order that nothing would separate us from God. Through Jesus' resurrection, all who accept Christ have assurance that death has been conquered and their salvation is secured. Salvation is a free gift from God. It is because of Jesus' death on our behalf that we can now stand before God. It is not our righteousness which stands before God; it is the righteousness of Christ which stands before us.

The Church exists as the one, holy and universal communion of saints both past and present brought together by God to be the royal bride of Christ. With Jesus Christ as its sole head and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church serves to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, glorify and worship God, and to live as a constant witness to God's salvation and reconciliation. Just as the Scriptures uplift both men and women to the role of prophet and leader, God continues to call both women and men to all ministries of the church.

Our faith should be evident within every aspect of our lives. It needs to be encouraged through regular reading of Scripture, prayer, fellowship, and Christian action. In the world, we are called to live by Christ's example showing mercy and kindness just as we have received mercy and grace from God. In prayer and worship, as individuals and as a community, we open our hearts before God lifting up praises, seeking forgiveness, thanking God, and asking for our needs and the needs of others to be met.

Worship is an extension and proper ordering of Christian life. Although it may take many forms and reflect differing denominations, it is necessary for our life as Christians to be vibrant and alive. In worship, we celebrate two sacraments. Through infant and adult baptism, we affirm God's covenant relationship and accept the crown of grace that God has already sealed through the cross. By participating in the Lord's Supper, we commune with the crucified and risen Lord; we are given a foretaste of the great wedding banquet that awaits us in heaven. These two sacraments are inspired by God, enacted by Christ, and made effective through the work of the Holy Spirit in faith.

And so we wait as faithful Christians: encouraged through the Holy Spirit; experiencing life and fruitfulness; sharing the light of Christ in a darkened world; inviting others to share in our experience of God's grace; and spreading the love of God until Christ returns to bring us home.