

Statement of Faith

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I believe in the one triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹ The triune God is transcendent and mysterious, yet mercifully near and experienced.² The relationship of the Holy Trinity flows into God's relationship with humanity. From Abraham and Sarah, to the Eucharist and Baptism that is celebrated to this day, God has been in covenantal relationship with us. This is the good news of the Gospel: as a child of God, I am created, redeemed, and transformed through and toward God's love. Because of divine relationship with the Holy Trinity, God's Kingdom is continually being unveiled, drawing us further into its ever-present peace³ and will be made known in the fullness of time because of the love of God shown through Jesus Christ.

The reconciling action of God's love is made fully known principally through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁴ Jesus entered life on earth humbly as a baby, born into poverty, but with the forbearance of God's love. Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of Man, fulfilling God's covenantal promise to the people of Israel and revealing it to include all of humanity.⁵ Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit, was tempted in the desert, and embarked on a ministry of healing and proclamation throughout the hinterlands and cities of the Holy Land.⁶ Jesus walked with us, talked with us, and felt with us; teaching us about God's coming reign that would recover and redeem the spiraling brokenness of humanity. Jesus' proclamation was so radical and challenging to the evils of this world that Jesus' ministry culminated with his political execution on the cross.⁷ After Jesus' death, his body was resurrected and he ascended to the right hand of God.⁸ As a follower of Christ, I confess the presence and reconciling love of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in this time and in this place while also proclaiming the coming and eternal reign of the triune God.

This confession and proclamation by me, a mere single follower, is made only because of membership in the Body of Christ, the holy community of the Church. Membership in the Body of Christ is through the presence and movement of the Holy Spirit⁹ and is marked by the visible signs of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹⁰ Baptism marks our identity as God's children and heirs of God's love.¹¹ Just as Jesus' ministry on this earth began with his baptism, so too does God's plan for our lives take root in the real sign, symbol, and binding covenant of the font and water. As members of the church, our baptismal identity is sustained and nourished by the Lord's Supper. The real sign, symbol, and binding covenant of the bread and wine connects us to the crucified and risen Christ so that we remember, give thanks, and look forward to a reconciled life with God.¹²

We understand ourselves as members of the Body of Christ through the Word of God.¹³ The immutable triune God has spoken – and is speaking – to us through Scripture. In turn, we participate in this divine drama by living out God's sovereign words, which has been passed down to us from generations. I believe that Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit that has captured the dependence, joy, apathy, and compassion, which marked – and continues to mark – our life with God. The words of Scripture are illuminated by the good news

¹ *The Nicene Creed*

² *Scots Confession*, 3.01, 3.06, 3.12.

³ John 14:25-30.

⁴ *The Confession of 1967*, 9.08.

⁵ Luke 2:29:32.

⁶ Mark 3:13-4:17.

⁷ John 19:30.

⁸ Matthew 28:16-20.

⁹ Acts 2

¹⁰ *The Heidelberg Catechism*, 4.066-4.068.

¹¹ Galatians 3:27-4:7.

¹² Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23; Matthew 26:26-30

¹³ John 1:1-5.

and presence of the Holy Spirit that is among us every time Scripture is read. The authority of Scripture is required by God to be studied, discerned, and ultimately proclaimed by the Body of Christ in all that we do. Because it reflects and unveils God's presence in our lives, Scripture gives our lives meaning. As a follower of Christ, I am called to be a careful interpreter of Scripture so that by understanding God in history, we may more fully understand ourselves as part of God's unfolding story.

As Word and Sacraments affirm our life with God, we embody our Christian identities through worship.¹⁴ Worship is a joyful, thoughtful, and creative response to God's love for us. In worship we interact with the triune God through Scripture, proclamation, movement, song, and reflection. We worship together through the sacred time and space of the Lord's Day, which we set aside from our normal lives to be together and to be with God. However, worship also takes place outside of the Lord's Day, when the sacred space and time of sanctuary spills-out into our daily vocation as children of God.¹⁵ Thus, meaningful worship also includes God's often surprising gift of prayer and pastoral care. Whether it be through organized liturgy or improvised dialogue at the hospital bedside, God co-creates sanctuary with and for us, gifting us time and space to bring our suffering and joy before Him as sacrifice. Gathered by the Holy Spirit, we praise God and are prayerfully present with each other during worship. Our life together as the Body of Christ is formed by the shared myriad experiences of worship.

I believe that Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA are called to facilitate, lead, teach, and learn from followers of Jesus as we all realize our identity as children of God. Ministers of Word and Sacrament are called to witness and engage in the careful interplay of Scripture, Sacraments, and worship as God's community moves toward a richer understanding of the triune God and to live with the assurance of the all-encompassing peace and wholeness of God's love.

¹⁴ *The Confession of 1967*, 9.50.

¹⁵ W-3.0503.