

FAITH STATEMENT

In the beginning, God created. Out of nothing, through the power of her voice, God spoke into being all we see and more we cannot. With his hands, he formed us: dust from dust, rib from rib. God breathed and we lived: connected. And God, God declared it all good, very good. In time, though, we fell away. We forgot we were connected: breath from breath, rib from rib. We forgot and we turned our backs on God, on one another. God didn't forget though, God called and promised and loved us. God liberated us and led us through the Red Sea. He provided for us in the wilderness and made covenants with us in the desert. God came down and God dwelled with us in the Tabernacle. Time and time again, we forget and turn away. Yet God has always been faithful and continues still to call us back – her promise never fading.

We are a broken and fearful people. We desire relationships, but we build walls. We want to know God, but the distractions of the world overwhelm us. We want to do what is right and good, but even when we do our best, we fall short, lost and confused. We strive after God, but find ourselves wandering in the wilderness wondering what went wrong. Created good, yet sinful and continually falling short, we are incapable of doing it ourselves.

Yet God heard our groaning, she remembered her covenant with Abraham and Sarah, with Isaac and Rebekah, with Moses and Miriam; God took notice and sent his only son: God of God, light of light, very God of very God; fully human and the fullness of humanity, fully divine and forever redefining divinity, fully human and fully God, the mystery of union we will never fully understand. Out of the depths of his love, God sent Jesus. Healing the sick, taking notice of the forgotten, teaching new understandings, Jesus transformed the way we understand what it means to be human and what it means to be God. And, out of the fullness of his humanity and the breadth of his love, Jesus endured death on the cross. Refusing to cater to the powers and principalities, he sacrificed himself for us – justifying our relationship with our Creator, bridging the gaps and tearing down the walls between us. The only one who was in a position to judge us redeemed us. Having died, God raised him, exulting him, confirming the relationship between Mother and Son, opening us all to the possibility of new life with God.

From the beginning, God has been present in our midst and beyond our boundaries. Blowing freely, inspiring creativity, pursuing justice, the Spirit has challenged and guided us and continues to do so today. Rousing faith within us, God the Spirit connects us to God the Creator and God the Christ, allowing us to be in relationship with the Triune God. Through the waters of Baptism, the Spirit claims us as beloved children of God. At the table, the Spirit feeds and sustains us, re-presenting Christ in our midst. Convicting us of the Scriptures, the Spirit pushes us to justice and liberation. Urging each of us individually, and all of us collectively, the Spirit calls us to be who God created us to be: free and beloved children of God. The Spirit binds us to one another and to God, in and through the Church. But the Spirit also pushes our edges. Refusing to be captive to the Church, the Spirit flows where it will, inspiring faith in many ways and in many places. The Spirit accomplishes the work of God in traditional and scandalous ways throughout the world.

As beloved children of God, we are called: to pursue God with faithfulness and devotion; to partner with the Spirit in the work of justice and liberation; to bring God's kingdom to fruition

here on earth. We are called to live as Christ in community with all people: clean and dirty, holy and profane, non-Christian and Christian, man and woman, gay and straight, normal and strange. We are called to be the Church, followers of our Lord and Savior, in every place and in every time, remembering that God has promised to be with us always, to the end of the age.