

Melissa A. Martin

Statement of Faith

I believe the triune God calls all creation—including you and me—into relationship with Godself.

I believe God the Creator makes and sustains the universe: the stars, the seas, the plants, the animals, and all humankind. By the inspiring work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture we see God's infinite love for all things, not only in the act of creation but also in the way the omniscient God chooses—through successive covenants, time and time again—to love and to draw near to all creation. In Scripture, we see how God chooses to love God's people and draw near to us despite the corruption of sin, even as we willfully hide, turn away, and reject God's love.

I believe we not only see but we experience God's saving love in Jesus Christ, who is God in human flesh. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we receive God's love and forgiveness for all sin, and we receive the assurance that ultimately nothing can separate us from the love of God.

In response to that love, I believe we have the responsibility to live in right relationship with God and with all creation. To do this we look to the example of Jesus Christ, and we depend on the power of the Spirit. During his ministry, Jesus showed us how to love and worship God and how to love and care for others and ourselves. I believe the Spirit sustains and inspires us (as the Spirit has from the beginning of time) to do these things that Jesus taught us, and I believe the Spirit helps us build the Kingdom of God on earth by empowering us to share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, through worship and acts of reconciliation.

Doing this work, we find that we are not alone; we are united by the Spirit to one another. I believe that, unified by the Spirit, the Church is a community of people who know themselves to be loved by God in Christ; whose fellowship spans time, space, and tradition; and who try to live in right relationship with God, one another, and all creation.

As we seek to live in right relationship with God, the Church turns to the story of God's love in Scripture and we share in the sacraments. In Scripture, the rule of faith and life, we see how God has chosen to build a relationship and make a covenant with people as well as how God asks that we love, serve, and worship. Through the sign and seal of the sacraments, God draws us into that intimate relationship, giving us a visible sign of God's invisible grace. Through baptism we die to our sin and rise with Christ—engrafted by God's grace into Christ. In the Lord's Supper we are united in Christ as the community of believers, sustained for our work in this world, and directed toward the hope that is to come.

Scripture teaches that this hope will look like a beautiful city, a functioning household, or an abundant feast. Each of these is a celebration of a relationship fulfilled, so I believe that this coming hope is that you and I and all creation will be raised into new life in Christ and will live together in right relationship with God.