

Statement of Faith

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I believe in the Trinity: One God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. I affirm “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” too. But, I don’t think of God as bound by human gender. God is sovereign and complex and beyond human definition. “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV)

Although I’m an ordained Minister, preaching is not my primary calling. I feel most called to come alongside people and companion them in their journeys of faith, living out the Word more than speaking it. As a chaplain and church minister, I’ve often accompanied individuals who felt “godforsaken”. So, Jurgen Moltmann’s thoughts in *The Crucified God* resonate deeply with me: “When God becomes man in Jesus of Nazareth, he not only enters into the finitude of man, but in his death on the cross also enters into the situation of man’s godforsakenness...The suffering in the passion of Jesus is abandonment, rejection by God, his Father. God does not become a religion...God does not become a law...God does not become an ideal...He humbles himself and takes upon himself the eternal death of the godless and the godforsaken, so that all the godless and the godforsaken can experience communion with him.” (40th Anniversary Edition, 2015, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN)

In my ministry, I cling to this almighty, omnipotent, yet “recklessly” loving God (as the contemporary song expresses it) who deigns and even desires to be present with us in our suffering to comfort us with the assurance of eternal communion. I try to reflect God’s love by humbling myself in the presence of suffering - offering a ministry of quiet listening, caring presence. I sit with people, and watch and listen for the unique ways God is providing love and support and comfort for them, and I affirm them in love. I also try to name pain, fear, or anger when present. I believe patient understanding and prayer are healing, and they help people find personal peace and remain in peaceful relations with their neighbors. In communal life, I believe an atmosphere of safe, sacred space and supportive leadership grounded in the love of Christ nurtures healthy relationships and builds a faithful corporate body.

I appreciate the Book of Confessions especially because it values statements of faith that arose in different times and places, recognizing that the Word of God can touch hearts and speak profoundly and uniquely to specific people in specific times in human history. While God’s basic nature doesn’t change, God still journeys with us, revealing God’s self anew in every age. I especially resonate with A Brief Statement of Faith PC(USA) and the Confession of Belhar. I also appreciate Presbyterian polity, in which Elders individually seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, and then speak the unique truths God reveals to them, so that together, the sum of their inspirations clarifies the church’s vision of God’s will for the whole.

I stand on the commandment to love, and employ it as the interpretive lens through which I view other scripture. “...Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, ‘Love others as much as you love yourself.’ All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV) I believe this love of which Jesus speaks is hard work, and the most difficult command to follow day by day. Given the certainty that I am human, my understanding is imperfect, and I am going to err; when I err, I try to err on the side of Christ’s love.