

I believe in one Triune God-the same in divine substance but distinct in three persons. This God is all powerful. This God is all loving. This God is the creator of all things seen and unseen. This God is holy and set apart. This God is just and rightfully condemns sin. This God is also compassionate and slow to anger. This God parents us with love and justice. This God longs for a relationship with creation. This God redeems all things. This God can make good from bad and beauty from ugliness. This God brought light into darkness and order into chaos. This God created a space for us in an impressive world. This God created us in God's own image. All people are image-bearers. Because of this, all people hold infinite worth, infinite beauty, and infinite potential. All people also suffer from the effects of sin, both as perpetrators and as victims. This sin mars creation. The cost of this sin is death. But God paid the price of His own blood in order to justly heal humanity's relationship to God and to each other.

I believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ reveals to us the fullness of God. Christ is God incarnate. Christ felt all the pains and pleasures of what it means to be human. He was tempted in every way but was without sin. Jesus Christ was perfect in obedience to God, even to the point of suffering an unjust death at the hands of sinners loved by God. Jesus descended into death and on the third day, early in the morning, was resurrected, thus defeating death and sin eternally and cleansing the whole creation. Jesus called people to a higher standard-the highest that has ever been known. Jesus promised us that He would never leave us alone. Jesus commanded us to love all people and to go and make disciples of many nations.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, our tutor and our guide. This Spirit is of the same divine substance as the Father and the Son. This is the Spirit that was promised to us when Jesus said that He would not leave us as orphans. This is the Spirit that intercedes for us. This is the Spirit that convicts us. This is the Spirit that empowers us to be the people that God promised we could become. This is the Spirit that draws us to God and that binds us with one another across space and time. This is the Spirit that enlightens our minds to understand the will of God and quickens our hearts and hands to do it. This Spirit is delightfully mysterious and incessantly surprising.

Scripture is the true witness to God's relationship with humanity and God's saving work throughout time. Scripture is the written inspired word that witnesses to the Word- God incarnate. Scripture is not merely ancient literature that has stood the test of time. Scripture is God's living and active word to us. It reveals the hearts of humanity, provides a word of judgment, proclaims our cleansing, and gives us hope. God has spoken to us and continues to speak to us through scripture.

I believe in the Church universal, one body that is made up of many indispensable parts. I believe that all people are called to this Church- this body. And I believe this Church exists to proclaim the Gospel- the good news- in both word and deed. The Church is a dynamic and diverse body that has been charged with a task of both temporal and eternal value. The Church is the family of God. The Church is not a building. It is not a program.

It is a body of people, redeemed sinners who, in spite of everything, God calls saints. These are sent out into the world to demonstrate grace, reconciliation, and forgiveness. The Church is the primary means and mechanism by which God brings the Kingdom of Heaven into a hurting and dark world.

We are welcomed into this Church through the waters of baptism, following in the footsteps that Christ took on the riverbank of the Jordan. In baptism we proclaim what the voice of God proclaimed over Jesus- that we are beloved children of God in whom God is well pleased.

We are nurtured in this Church through the meal of the Lord's supper, as we take and eat together in the presence of God, remembering that Christ has come, Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ shall come again.

Our hope is found in God alone- the God who all powerfully and all lovingly and all completely healed us from Sin and freed us from death. The bodily resurrection is our surest proof and most powerful witness that nothing, not even death, can separate us from our eternal relationship with our creator. We are still awaiting the reconciliation of all things, when God will wipe every tear from our eyes and heal every broken body, mind, and soul. God has promised a celebration, when humanity will be reunited in perfect harmony with itself, the rest of creation, and God. God wants this to happen and so it will happen.

While we wait, we have been given God's unyielding-never-ceasing-always-believing presence. We have been invited into God's Church. And we have been shown God's command- what we should *do* in this great big world. We are taught and empowered to be a light and a witness throughout the humdrum, the pleasantries, and the pain of daily life. We are waiting, but we are not passively waiting. We are waiting with a purpose- that is the duty of loving God and neighbor. And we are waiting with an unshakable promise, which is the foundation of our hope.