

Craig Kunkle's Statement of Faith

I believe God created the world and us humans to be in a covenantal relationship with God, creation, and our fellow human beings. God tells us that the Covenant is "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." God gave us the law to understand what it means to be God's people. While God keeps their side of the relationship, we continue to fall short in keeping our side, which is called **sin**. But even in our state of unrighteousness, God chose to come to us as Jesus Christ, God **incarnate**, the perfect relationship between human and divine, to do what we could not. As Christians, we are called to bring God's presence into the brokenness of the world as Jesus Christ did for us. Through Jesus Christ's perfect faith, Jesus Christ gives us the **gift of Grace**, which saves us from the just end of our sins.

I don't know why this world was created in its finitude, but God, through the life and death of Jesus Christ, has the final word over this creation. God gives us this undeserved gift of Grace so that through that gift, we can focus on doing the work God has always called us to do here on earth. We are called to love God and others, repair relationships, seek justice, and defend the oppressed. We do not have to do this alone. Since Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we have the Holy Spirit, God with us, to lead us.

The Holy Spirit equips and empowers God's people to do God's work. The **Church**, led by Jesus Christ, is where God's faithful people join together in relationship with one another and God, and through the **Holy Spirit**, hear God's Word, participate in sacraments, and hear God's call to heal all those in need.

The Trinity is a good example of God's diversity and unity. Three fully distinct yet perfectly one, and this perfect community points to God's ultimate end for us to live in a relationship with God and one another. This perfect union also points to our **stewardship of the planet**.

The world is full of injustice, suffering, and brokenness in people's relationships with God and each other. As the Priesthood of all Believers, God calls us to go out and be reconcilers as Jesus has reconciled us to God.

However, we will continue to be separated from God in this world. Although we work to bring the foretaste of God's kingdom here, it will not be realized until Jesus Christ comes again and makes all things new. It is this great hope to which Jesus attests, to which the Church points, and for which we hope.

Scripture is the one true revelation of God and the Trinity. Through the power of the Holy Spirit moving through the community of faith, these texts that point to God's presence with God's people were collected and preserved. But these are not historical documents; through

the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, they become the living Word of God whenever they are faithfully read or preached.

The **Sacraments** are implemented by God and commanded by Jesus Christ to benefit the people of God. They are signs of what God has done, is, and will do both for the individual and within the community.

During the **Lord's Supper**, we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, remember and proclaim everything God has done for us as individuals and all of humanity. We join with Jesus and all Believers in a meal that is always enough through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, this meal feeds us spiritually so that we can continue to do God's work in the world, helping those around us and fighting for justice. However, we also look forward to sharing this meal with Jesus in the New Creation.

In **Baptism**, we are sealed to God by the power of the Holy Spirit, dying with the same death as Jesus Christ and united with him in a resurrection like his into a new life and a new way of being. (John 6) Jesus Christ instituted baptism, and we are called into baptism by the Triune God. Baptism unites us as God's people, as the Priesthood of Christ, as the whole Body of Christ, and with God. Baptism is our public proclamation of everything God has done in our lives and our desire to be in a relationship with God and to participate in God's work in the world.

This new way of being sealed to us through baptism is God's call to bring Justice to a broken world in **mission**. We have been reconciled to God despite our broken relationship with him. We are now called to reconcile our relationships with others and help them reconcile with one another and God. We are to walk alongside and build relationships with those who struggle and seek a helping hand. Our mission is to take the "Balm of Gilead" into the wounded world.