

## Statement of Faith

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*“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*  
*John 14:34--35*

God is eternally perfect and good. When God created humans, God chose to give us a free will instead of making puppets who would also be perfect. The first humans experienced God directly in their lives, but soon followed temptation and tried to become God. Sin entered the world. God did not abandon God's creation after sin entered the world and disrupted all of God's perfect creation. Throughout the whole of the Old Testament, God continually showed mercy to God's people in spite of their unfaithfulness. After God's created beings failed many times, God sent God's son Jesus, to atone for sin through Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection. Jesus experienced all the emotions and temptations we experience, but did not fall into sin. Those closest to Jesus during his lifetime, Jesus' students or disciples, led the church after the resurrection. They did not do this on their own, but with Jesus' promise to be with us at all times and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide our actions. The disciples led the church, but ordinary people spread the Christian faith throughout the known world.

As part of the Christian church, we have been given the gift of the Bible. Throughout the Biblical narrative, we can learn about God's compassion and love for all of God's creation. From the biblical narrative, we learn that God's nature is love, not anger or retribution. We are created in God's image and are created to serve God by caring for God's creation. We are blessed not because of who we are but because of the love our creator has for us, blessing us to bless others.

God reaches out to us in love through both the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Through baptism, we become a part of God's chosen family. Through Word and Sacrament God makes us one of God's chosen people. God does not leave us on our own throughout life, but instead gives us the Holy Spirit as our guide. In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we are assured that God is with us as God becomes part of every cell of our body. Through bread and grape juice, we are strengthened for God's service wherever we are. One of Jesus' last acts before his death was to give us the promise that we are never alone but God is with us throughout our life.

The Christian church enables us to work together as God's family serving God's creation. Individually our actions are limited, but working together, we can change lives and reach out to many more people. We also strengthen each other for service by sharing God's actions in our lives. Before Jesus' death, he gave his followers a new command, the verses quoted at the beginning of this paper. We witness to our relationship and faith by how we treat others. There are no limits to God's love for us. Our love is to be for all people, not just those who are like us.