

Sarah Are

Statement of Faith

I believe in the Triune God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the world, mysterious and entirely good. I believe that God works in mysterious ways, and that I will never fully understand the strength, magnitude, will, or power of God, yet I believe I will spend my life trying to. I believe that God cannot be limited by human names, yet out of necessity for metaphors, I believe that the names Creator,<sup>1</sup> Teacher,<sup>2</sup> Mother<sup>3</sup> and Father,<sup>4</sup> attest to the true and good nature of our all-loving, untamable God.

I believe, trust in, and seek to follow the life of Jesus of Nazareth- challenging and inspiring me to live my life in service to others, and to be a better version of myself than I may naturally know. I believe that the death of Jesus Christ shows us that God too has suffered both alongside and for us; and that the resurrection promises that death does not have the last word, and that love is indeed stronger than hate.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God's living breath, which shapes us, startles us, comforts us, works alongside us, and sometimes even works in spite of us. I believe that the Holy Spirit is present with us in the midst of our brokenness, seeking to provide comfort and guidance to the afflicted, "with sighs too deep for words,"<sup>5</sup> hemming us in before and behind.<sup>6</sup>

I believe in the authority of holy scripture, as the primary guide for the Christian community, due to its divinely inspired nature, and the ways in which it testifies to the work of God in this world. However, I also believe that scripture was written by human hands, with human opinions that we must interpret with great care. Yet, as God has spoken truth and reconciliation throughout the ages, I trust God "will continue to speak through the Scriptures in a changing world and in every form of human culture."<sup>7</sup>

I believe in the sacraments as a method of unity with God and God's people, attested to in scripture, and enacted by Jesus Christ. I believe that baptism gives visible expression that we are sealed in the covenant of God's invisible grace, forever joined to the community of Saints, and washed clean of our sins- over and over again, always undeservingly. I believe that when Eucharist is shared the coming kingdom of God is proclaimed, and the body of Christ is at it's best.

I believe that God is love, and that if God is love, it is my duty to aim for love too. I believe, as is attested to in scripture, that we are called to love our neighbor by feeding the hungry, tending to the ill, proclaiming the good news, and working for peace. I believe that like the disciples, we are called to follow Jesus of Nazareth, and that *that* job is a day-in and day-out call that should impact my lifestyle, political choices, personal relationships, and sense of identity.

I believe that the church, when at it's best, can change the world, providing a home and a family for those in need, and drawing the best out of all of us. I believe that the church has changed me, and I

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>2</sup> John 13:13

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 66:13

<sup>4</sup> Luke 10:21-22

<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:26

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 139:5

<sup>7</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), *The Confession of 1967: Inclusive Language Text*, 9.29.

believe in the work of the community of saints guiding me along the way. I believe that the church has a responsibility to be God's hands and feet in this world, and thus she cannot sit passively, but is called to a life of advocacy, community, and creativity. I believe that the church should be a home to all, practicing love in the truest form by welcoming and affirming individuals regardless of race, gender, sex, class, intellect, ability, or age.

I believe that God would want that.

I believe that I am a Child of God- known, loved, forgiven, and claimed, despite my constant shortcomings and failures. I believe that God chooses me, and continues to choose me, even when I fail to choose God in return. Thus, I believe and am deeply inspired, to be and to offer up my best self for the glory of God every day, for as long as I shall live; and I believe that that is an honor.