

Statement of Faith            Grant F. C. Gillard

With 531 worshipping churches within an hour's drive of Jackson, MO, I have to ask, "Why worship with us?"

I believe our priority is found in gathering together, experiencing God's unconditional love so we can share it with others and make a difference in their lives. I believe we need to remind ourselves that our worst days are never so bad we are beyond the reach of God's grace. Likewise, our best days are never so good that we are beyond the need of God's grace.

I believe each day is lived out in the tension of following Christ in a world which deceptively woos us to take a self-indulgent road of least resistance, a path of least persistence.

I believe in a God who calls both imperfect saints and redeemed sinners, equipping and empowering them for service through the community of faith, a ministry that will neither be contained nor restrained within the four walls of what we commonly refer to as, "the church."

I believe Christ's death and resurrection is the power to defeat sin and death, demonstrating God's redemptive love and the forgiveness that comes by faith through grace.

I believe God's goodness and mercy follow us, even pursue us, persevere with us through our unloving ways and belligerent attitudes, never releasing us as there is nothing that separates us from that steadfast love.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, an ever-present help that speaks to my mind and heart, internally, through the gentle, intuitive nudges discerned in my quiet times, and, externally, through the veiled circumstances confirmed through the incorrigibly quirky people providentially placed in my life.

I believe in the Bible as God's living Word to us, reshaping how we comprehend our lives and the events around us. It reveals to us who we are and what we might become. The Bible holds those promises of redemption and restoration, challenging our daily lives to live out God's good news.

I believe in the strength of local missions, but less so to fill the membership roll with warm bodies and much more to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The "Wait for them to come to us" model died a long time ago.

I believe many people need a personal, physical expression of God's love, beyond words, dispensed through our generosity and acts of kindness. I believe the church needs to be in the world backing up our words and lofty ideals with a generously tangible, incarnational presence.

I believe in praying with my eyes open, for God has already provided for our needs, including the strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

I accept the reality that ministry is not necessarily designed to be neat and pretty. I want to believe when troubled souls cross our thresholds, this often-messy encounter is no mere accident, rather these are the lambs God gives us to feed. I want to believe that God entrusts these people to our safekeeping, though on many occasions I would prefer they begin to believe the Methodist pastor is a better preacher than me.