

Statement of Faith - Tommy Langejans

May 5th, 2023

I believe in the one living, Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has existed since before the creation of the world, and who will be there after its last days, when Christ will return and perfect relationship will be restored between God and creation in God's kingdom. Each person of the Trinity is distinct from the other two, but simultaneously unified and present with the others in everything that God does. God is perfect in all ways, and in perfect goodness, pushes creation towards intimate relationship with God's good self.

I believe in God the Father, who created all things, made humanity to be in the image of God's self, gave humanity a system of laws for their benefit, and established multiple covenants with them. I believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God, fully divine and fully human, the one who taught and modeled what life with God would look like in the new covenant while simultaneously fulfilling God's covenant with Israel. This was accomplished in Jesus's once-and-for-all death and resurrection for the forgiveness of each person's sins. Through Jesus' sacrifice, humanity's fate of sin, of turning away from God and towards death, is defeated, replaced with the promise of eternal life. I believe in the Holy Spirit, which guides all of humanity towards God and pushes them towards Godly living. Through her, the life of creation is sustained, and God's good work is done throughout it.

All of this is told to us through Scripture, the inspired word of God written by imperfect humans to teach us about God and help us to know God better. I do not believe that Scripture gives us every answer about God, nor is it appropriate to hold it up as highly as a fourth person of the Trinity. However, I believe it contains everything God wants us to know about God's self, and we should hold it highly as an authoritative witness to God's grace which continues to speak into our lives today.

I believe God's love for the world is far more expansive than we can ever understand, and it is through participation in the church, the one, universal body of Christ, that each person of faith is called to share that love with the world around them. While membership in a particular church might not be a realistic option for some, we are encouraged to pursue our faith lives alongside other Christians, seeking unity beyond our differences. Together, we are called to open ourselves to God's work through us, enacting justice, healing, reconciliation, and loving presence towards a beloved world broken by sin.

Through the sacrament of baptism, the church celebrates and marks a person being incorporated into the death and resurrection of Christ and welcomed formally into the church community. As an adult, one is formally welcomed as a member of the body of Christ and commits themselves to following Christ in their daily living. As a child, all are reminded of God's unearned, unfailing love before their birth and outside of anything they could do.

Through the sacrament of communion, we are reminded of Christ's death and resurrection for all, that God constantly sustains us, that God is as close to us as the bread and wine in our mouths, and that God gives us the hope of life after death, among other wonderful things. Neither of these sacraments must be worked for or earned. They are gifts of God's grace given for all people to enjoy.