

STATEMENT OF FAITH  
GAIL NICHOLAS SCHNEIDER

I believe in God, the Creator of the Universe, who has provided us with many magnificent things: stars, flowers, snakes and much much more, and whom we can trust and love. I believe in Jesus, His Son and our Savior, who came to earth to teach us HOW to live, and who was sacrificed and died for our sakes. I believe in the Holy Spirit of God who dwells within each one of us and is available, if we choose to believe, to be our Comforter and Guide. These three aspects of God make up the Trinity.

Because Jesus died for our sakes, He is able to reconcile us to God. His death paid the price for our sins. Through that reconciliation, we can have 'new life', Salvation, in the Heart of God. The Church's Ministry and Mission is to teach the Scriptures, to guide her members away from sinful living, and to be the place we come together to rejoice and worship. The Church is called to look beyond her membership to ALL humans in order to offer the saving Grace of Christ to all of us, for we ALL are made in the Image of God. The Church uses the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, and the Sacraments, to help in that guidance.

The Sacraments are celebrated in the Church to show us again and again God's Love for us: as children we are Baptized and named before God. Communion reminds us, in the ritual of wine and bread, of Jesus's death on the Cross where His body and blood were spilled out for us.

At Christmas, we celebrate how God humbled Himself by sending His Son as an infant to live in a carpenter's rude home among God's people. As he grew, Jesus walked and taught about how we are called to live in peace with one another by using concrete teachings and parables that made God's Law accessible to the people. The power of the Gospel and the Liturgy can confront and inspire believers, freeing them to turn away from evil, and once again, move towards God. The Church (us!) is called to reach out with tolerance, guidance and love to those outside her walls. Those both inside the Church and those outside will continue to Sin against God's Word. Yet God's Love and Forgiveness are available to us, again and again. The Gospel stories are able to reach through the stony exterior of our hearts to touch that soft vulnerable interior that longs for God's Love and Forgiveness. Peace comes to those who allow God's love to come in.