

Statement of Faith
Rev. Deborah Packard

I believe in the Christ who calls us to be followers. Jesus preached and taught so that we might learn what it means to hold Christ in our hearts. I believe that Jesus preached the social gospel. Through his life and death we learn what it means to live as members of the Kingdom of God. When we are called to pick up our crosses and follow him we are to speak truth against all kinds of oppression and injustice. We are called to envision that time when no child goes to bed hungry or afraid. Jesus spoke most often of economic issues, telling parables that exposed the greed and thirst for power of the wealthy elite in Palestine. Our actions must be our prayers as we go out into the world helping others to find their dreams.

Through the Holy Spirit we are given the courage and the energy to turn dreams into reality. Out of chaos the breath of God moved among the waters and brought forth order to the created world of wonder and beauty. All creation is deemed good by God. We cannot fail as we work to make those dreams of justice become real for the Holy Spirit, that same breath of life, carries us along on our path, buoying us up with hope and faith. Where our culture sees reason for pessimism, as people of faith we see hope. It is through God's grace that we are able to hold onto that faith.

I believe that God calls us into right relationship - with one another, with ourselves, and with God. We know God as we look out into the sea of humanity that surrounds us or as we view the majestic natural beauty that makes up this world. When we truly care for our neighbor as self, God is there. God within and God without - God in every corner of the universe, God in every corner of our hearts.

God calls for our entire self. When we turn to our self-made idols of wealth and power or our worship of the "self-made" individual, then we sin. If we refuse to share what we have with others and focus instead on the accumulation of material goods, we turn our backs on the God of Abraham and Sarah and Jesus of Nazareth. God offers us freely the gifts of love and meaning in our lives but when we turn to other ways to satisfy our longings then we are called to repent - to turn our faces to the light of God so that our faces will shine with the light of the Divine presence.

The church is that community of believers who crave the wholeness that is found only through grace. Together we find strength in holding onto our faith. We are the living embodiment of the sacrament of communion as we become the body of Christ and go out into the world to serve and heal, preach and pray. We seek that wholeness by joining together in our worship and our mission. Through the community we find relationship and connection. Together, we present a strong force of good in this world as we go out into the world doing the work of peace and justice, knowing that we are not alone in our work. Together, we can move mountains.