

Mieke Vandersall

Statement of Faith

Holy Scripture

God's Word spoken

in the First and the Second, the Old and the New

giving authority to our experience of God with us

the beginning and the ending point

strength, hope, and understanding in the

spiritual stories of our ancestry unfolding the

Holy Spirit's whispers and moves with God as

Creator of Adam and Eve, the stars the animals and all things to come

Leader of Moses and his people to the promised land

Companion who refused to leave Hagar at the well by her lonesome

Anger with the Israelites' unfaithfulness and lack of trust

Prophet through the nameless woman of Samaria that Jesus meets at Jacob's well

Lover, Redeemer, and Savior in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth,

Christ in the tradition of prophetic liberators.

The Holy Spirit blows through these ancient stories,

journeys, and

teachings

complex, and

contradictory

yet authoritative authority as

Living Word

both mirror and window.

Christ,

the Creator's self giving and incarnation,

whom the Spirit claimed through baptism

Christ, God's healing hands on earth

Christ, God's teacher for all creatures

Christ, God's preacher for transformation.

The figure of Jesus the Christ

the One who lives his life while running for his life

the One who upsets religious, social and economic structures that abuse power

the One who speaks the truth even when that means life is threatened

the One who dies the most inhumane debasing ways of his times, all the while claiming his

authority as King.

No King would die on a cross but Christ wasn't typical.

Our Lord was killed because life was his focus

believing in life

so much that he rose from the dead.

Christ present today calls us to radical, counter-cultural acts setting our face towards justice.

“A sacrament is when something holy happens ...
If we weren't as blind as bats, we might see that life itself is sacramental.”¹

And yet we Presbyterians and Reformed children of God
are given two Sacraments that give a window into life's holiness.
God promises to us.

And we respond to God's grace
by sprinkling water
by pouring wine and breaking bread.
The water which seals our children into God's covenant,
the water of life which flows and changes shape and structure
the constant reminder of God's love and forgiveness.

The bread broken and the wine poured,
not Christ's actual body and blood,
but Christ with us
present in the bread and wine
present in our brokenness
present.
Inviting us to be present.
Asking us if we are present.

Christ is the head of the church,
We are members of Christ's body
continually discerning how the Holy Spirit
guides us
to make Christ's body healthy and whole.

Christ's whole and healthy body
speaks truth to power
and loves to worship and praise God.
The body of Christ often sins by separating itself from the head through fear
of change
of compromise
of confusion
and the body tries to become the head
even though Christ is the head of the body.

Yet thanks be to God
for God's continued working in the church
for God's insistence on trying again and again
for God's urging of us to stay committed to each other as members of the body
For grace, and grace, and still more grace.

¹ Fredrick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993. pg. 101.