

Statement of Faith - Walter Danforth

I entered into adulthood a theist. I believed in a monolithic God. A creator, lawgiver and judge. Jesus Christ was a part of the liturgy of worship and a mantra at the end of prayer. I had no need of a savior. I would enter into heaven on the strength of my character and obedience to the law. Jesus the man was an embarrassment. Too good to be true. I had no need for Christ the savior.

For the next fifty years, the Holy Spirit worked on me. I became convicted that my life was going nowhere and that God was continually wooing me into relationship. I began to see Jesus as the incarnation of God in human form. His parables and teachings showed me the Way in which I should pattern my life. My character suffered so many disappointments and dead-ends that I began to see my need of Christ the savior. My life was full of sin and disobedience. The good news in Jesus Christ was what I needed to hear. God's reconciling work in Jesus became real to me. I believed that God first loved me and nothing I could do could add or subtract from that.

Through the ministry of many loving congregations and pastors, the depth of my beliefs has grown. I have been rebuked and set back on a right path many times. Each a growing experience. The assurance of pardon and the resurrection to new life through Jesus became my daily need. I desired more understanding. Through Bible study I gained more knowledge of the living Word and the word of God. The living Word, Jesus Christ is the lens through which I interpret the word of God.

I believe in corporate worship, prayer and confession. The worshipping congregation leads me to act out the parables of Christ in mission to the world. To feed the hungry, clothe the naked, speak for the speechless, shelter the homeless, teach the unknowing, include the excluded and to witness to the good news wherever God sends me.

The sacraments give us an opportunity to renew our commitments regularly individually and as a worshipping community. Baptism and communion are the sacramental moments in our lives where God breaks through and the mystery of God's grace intrudes and overwhelms our lives. In communion with Christ as the host at the table we are brought into an intimate relationship with our savior. In baptism and renewal of our baptism we declare Christ as Lord of our life. In each of these the living Word, Jesus Christ, is manifest.

Mary and I have been growing together and our lives have been yoked in mission. Each of us believes that we are called as a couple to be commissioned lay pastors. Each of us brings equal and unique gifts of the spirit to our service.

We thank God for being so gracious to us.