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### Statement of Faith

There is one God who creates, acts, waits, pursues, and saves with love beyond human imagining. From eternity God created everything, calling it good and wholly loved. Having sovereign power did not keep God from desiring or having intimate relationships with creation. God and people were friends and life was good. People loved God too but they craved God's power more than friendship. They betrayed God's trust, broke God's heart and opened a gap between them no person could close. By God's grace alone the human story did not end in that way.

Instead, the eternal God elected to live as a human and was born into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. As a human, God experienced everyday struggles and temptations and Jesus remained perfectly faithful. Again people betrayed God by allowing power to corrupt goodness and malice to sentence an innocent man to a brutal death. Again God forgave human error and, on Easter morning, God closed the gap people had created. By his death and resurrection Jesus freed people from the grip of sin.

Saturated with the passion of God's Spirit, members of the early Christian movement shared God's story tirelessly and courageously. God challenged ordinary people to carry out infinite plans and it worked. The gospel awakened people to God's Spirit and acquainted them with Jesus Christ. Jesus promised to be present with his followers and wanted to unite and empower them for mission so he told them to baptize people and share the Lord's Supper together. Telling God's story, enacting God's love, following God's lead, and celebrating the gospel remain primary tasks of the Church.

The Bible is the perfect tool for fulfilling these tasks because it is God's story. If the Bible were given a literary name it would be, "God With Us: The Collected Works." The fact that its words were written by human hands over thousands of years does not diminish its potency. The Bible is "holy" and uniquely authoritative because it has a long history of doing more than words alone can do. From its pages God speaks, troubled lives are turned around, relationships are mended, and people find challenge, purpose, inspiration, healing, love, and life.

The bad news is people haven't changed much. We are still entangled in sin, often seeking our own pleasure and benefit at the expense of God's plan. The good news is God hasn't changed either. God still forgives, restores, and gives second chances. God's grace and love are abounding in the world. In time they will overflow, culminating in the restoration of the world and all creation forever. Jesus said God alone knows the day and hour. While the world waits eagerly for perfect justice to flourish on earth and for God's love to rule the lives of people, we are called to follow God and be messengers.