

## **Statement of Faith** – Michael G. Hegeman

I believe in the Three-Personed God, whose self-revelation to humanity and all creation is as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, attested to in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are unique witness to this divine reality.

I believe in God the Eternal, YHWH Elohim – the Great I AM, the uncreated Creator, Source of all life who has chosen not to live apart from the creation, but to extend to the entire created order the full benefits of the Divine Presence. We live in response to this God with a faith that seeks continually to grasp a fuller understanding of and live in faithful response to such providential love and care.

I believe in the Anointed Deliverer, Jesus the Christ, Son of God, and yet himself truly God, the Redeemer of all creation, Reconciler of all separated humanity, the eternal Mediator who emptied himself of his equality with God, in order to be found in human form, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the human woman Mary, mother of Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus Christ is God's promised, saving *Messiah*.

I believe Jesus Christ was truly God and truly human in nature, person, and will. He was baptized by John in the river Jordan, during which he received the power of the Holy Spirit, was tempted to sin by the Tempter, and yet remained sinless. He lived with humanity in order to teach the earthly reality of God's heavenly Kingdom, and to draw back to God all creation separated by sin. Jesus performed miracles (*deeds of power*), giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and movement to the crippled; he fed the multitudes and raised the dead. Jesus taught with the authority and love of God, his Father, yet was rejected by humanity, and crucified unjustly by religious and temporal authorities. Jesus Christ offered up his life willingly, so that all might know the atoning (reconciling) love and grace of God.

I believe Jesus Christ suffered the pain of death and his body was buried in a tomb. God received his spirit. Jesus' death forever rent the separating wall between God and humanity, as witnessed in the tearing of the Temple Veil. On the third day God the Father raised Jesus in body and spirit, and he, appearing first to the women and then to the other disciples, for a period of days, shared meals with them and commissioned them to service of God's kingdom before he ascended into heaven. Christ's resurrection shines as the glorious dawn that attests to God's eternal victory over the shrouds of darkness.

I believe we remember and participate in Christ's self-giving, in the breaking of the bread and in the sharing the cup. We enter into the fulfillment of God's covenant through Christ in the memorial meal (*anamnēsis*) in which we are united with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, receiving nourishment for our souls unto both temporal and eternal life.

I believe in God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God Eternal and Jesus Christ, to be the Companion and Comforter to humanity and all creation. The Holy Spirit is the Breath of God that inspires humanity to seek after God, as a deer pants for water, to turn from un-love and darkness, to live out the Gospel justly, compassionately, and creatively in all the world, and, along with all heavenly hosts and the communion of the saints, to sing praise to our God and to God's eternal Christ.

I believe the Church was called into existence to be Christ's Body, when his followers gathered in Jerusalem after his resurrection, and received the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to preach God's Good News and to baptize. God continues to call humanity to be baptized into one faith with the waters

of regeneration; to be a priesthood of all believers, knowing grace and deliverance through Jesus Christ, and to live in this world in accord with the Gospel in servant-oriented and fervent expectation of Christ's heavenly reign. The Church remains Christ's Body, a forgiven community of servants always in need of forgiveness, who baptize the faithful, share in the *koinonia* of Christ's sacred feast, preach the Good News of salvation, and work to liberate all people from the oppression of body, mind, and spirit.

I believe that Christ, the beginning and end of all that is, seen and unseen, comes, and will come, in love, to reconcile all humanity and creation to the will and person of God through grace, in the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Scriptures have borne and continue to bear witness to successive generations of God's covenant people, Christ comes to reign in majesty and glory, so that all creation may join in the eternal hymn, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Amen.