

THE REVEREND DR. NANCY R. BIRDSONG
Statement of Faith

I believe that God is love in a sense so pure and intense that it is beyond our imagining. God is the source and goal of our being who fashioned all that exists as an expression of that love. God gives us the freedom to make choices and to learn from our own mistakes and discoveries. Within that freedom, there is the possibility of sin, of turning away from God and knowing the pain of breaking the most important of all relationships. We sometimes place limits on God, not only by trying to bend the Holy to our desires but also by not letting God into our lives past a nodding acquaintance.

I believe Jesus is God's way of reaching into our world in order to heal our brokenness, offer forgiveness, bring us back into communion with our Creator and show us the way of love. Sharing our humanity, Jesus not only took on our suffering but transformed it. Even when it became apparent that he was on a path that could lead to his death, Jesus continued to be himself and, with integrity, proclaimed and acted upon his commitment to mercy, justice and care for the poor and the oppressed. Jesus taught us how to live in peace even in the midst of life's storms. Reminding us of the fragility of life, he encouraged us to engage in it by taking the risk of trusting God, living with an open heart and acting with compassion and mercy. His self-giving love, poured out for us most completely on the Cross, assures us that whatever it is in our lives that separates us from God, Jesus is there to bring us back home. We are deeply loved, forgiven and cherished. Jesus opens his arms not to a select few wrapped in blankets of religious certainty but to the whole world. Through Christ's Resurrection, we know that whatever evil this world has to offer, God has overcome it and gives us the joyous possibility of new life.

Discipleship is less about thinking, feeling and saying the right things and more about doing the loving thing, despite our uncertainty or doubt. Jesus invites us to be temples of God's presence, stewards of God's Creation and co-creators of God's ongoing good work in this world. Holy Spirit is God moving in us to prompt us in that work. Through the Spirit, we are able to become more aware of the holy interwoven in the ordinary, seeing Christ in our neighbor and the wonder of God's presence touching the world around us. The Church enables us to continue in our adventure of faith with others whose perspectives and life experiences can help us look at God through a wider lens. The Bible, both inspired by God and touched by human fingerprints, gives us guidance in our spiritual journey. Through the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we are aware that God draws near to us, claims us as beloved children and sustains us for the work of discipleship. The church gathers us in to worship and nurtures us in the life of faith, then sends us out to serve others in compassion and love so that we become reflections of God's light in the world.