

**Stephen H. (Steve) Wilkins**  
**Statement of Faith**

I believe in God. God is holy, righteous, omnipotent, all-wise; creator of heaven and earth, author and sustainer of life, source of all that is good, sovereign over all creation. God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (Ps. 103:8).

I believe that God created humans in the image of God, as the pinnacle of creation (Gen. 1). In sin and rebellion, humans fell from our original created state. I am a sinner, and I dwell in the midst of a sinful and broken world (Is. 6:5). Sin has estranged humans from God, from one another, from our true selves, and even from the created world. I need a Savior. We need a Savior.

I believe that God, not content to leave us to perish in our sin, became incarnate in his Son. Fully God and fully human, Jesus is the true revelation of God, and the revelation of who we are intended to be as humans. On the cross, Jesus redeemed us from our sin—God made him who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

I believe in Jesus Christ. He is my Savior and Lord. Jesus' work upon the cross is alone sufficient to reconcile me to God. In Christ I am a new creation, and have been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17ff). Christ is my Savior, not simply so that I will go to heaven, but even more, that I may serve him and glorify him as his disciple.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the mysterious One of the great Mystery, the holy Trinity. Co-equal with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Counselor / Comforter (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit awakens me to the presence of God, convicts me of my sin, confirms my faith in Jesus Christ, and guides me in righteousness. The work of sanctification is enabled in me by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. My understanding of God's word and God's will is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I believe, in light of the mercies of God, I am called to offer myself as a living sacrifice, conforming my life to the life and teaching of Christ (Rom. 12:1ff). Indeed, I am compelled by the love of Christ, to love the Lord with all my being, and to love my neighbor as myself (Mk 12:28-34). I believe that I cannot love the Lord my God if I am not also loving my neighbor; neighborly love must include the establishment of justice, the extending of mercy, support for the oppressed, comfort for the broken-hearted, relief for the poor, forgiveness for the sinner.

I believe that Christ calls his believers together in the one holy apostolic church, the body of Christ. In Christ we belong to one another and need each other in order to accomplish the work to which we have been called (1 Cor. 12). Walls of hostility are dismantled by the grace of God. In the church we are called to be one, just as Jesus and the Father are one; our witness to the love of God is most powerful when we live in unity (Jn 17:22-23). The church as the body of Christ is to manifest to the world the love, grace, and new life of the gospel; and we are to call the world to truth, peace, reconciliation, and gospel transformation.

I believe that there are two sacraments in the life of the church: baptism, and the Lord's supper (communion). The sacraments were instituted by God to seal upon our hearts the affirmation that we are part of the covenant community of the people of God. In baptism we are reminded that God calls us to be God's people; the call from God precedes our seeking and our coming to God in faith. As baptism declares God's promise and grace upon us, a person need be baptized only once. The baptized are united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3ff). Therefore, whenever we witness the baptism of another person, we are filled with hope in the remembrance of our own baptism.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ on the night before his death. In the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the cup – and the sharing of these elements with the people of God – we are reminded that on the cross Jesus gave his body and shed his blood unto death, for the forgiveness of our sins. Furthermore, as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we are reminded that the risen and living Christ continues to nourish us for eternal life (John 6:50-54). Our union with Christ in the sacrament also unites us with believers in every time and place. When we come to the table, we do so as repentant sinners; in the sacrament we are met with grace and steadfast love. Our appropriate response is thanksgiving and self-offering.

I believe that the Bible is the word of God. It is by the teaching of Scripture that I have come to know who God is, who I am, and how I have been reconciled to God through Christ. Everything I have declared above is the result of God's word preached, proclaimed, discussed, and studied into my heart, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

To paraphrase John 21:25, “I believe many other things, as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that I would need much more space than one page...”