

Carroll Fitzgerald's Statement of Personal Faith

I believe that there is only one true God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one substance (essence), but three distinct persons. Through this example of unity in one, the Trinity is the ultimate example of love. With one, there is only self-love; with two, there is love for each other at the exclusion of others; with three, there is inclusion/invitation to others to be loved and love.

I believe Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and was fully incarnated as a human being without ceasing to be fully God. He, alone, was without sin and willingly gave himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humankind. On the third day after his death, he rose from the grave and continued to interact with, and teach, his disciples. He ascended physically into heaven where he sits at the right hand of the Father, where he makes intercession for all the saints.

I believe that the Bible is the Holy Spirit inspired Word of God and is the ultimate authority for our Christian faith and practice. Because the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is a trustworthy source for God's revelation to us concerning himself, his works, and is a guide to how we should live our lives.

I believe that it is inherent in human nature that we are all sinners and are subject to God's condemnation for our sins. Without Jesus Christ, there is nothing we can do to save ourselves from eternal damnation. It is only through the grace of God, through the Holy Spirit, that our hearts are prepared to receive Jesus Christ as our personal savior. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, God declares us righteous and we become children of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God dwells in us and we become new persons, growing in holiness and strength in our faith. None of this is accomplished through our own efforts, but only through the undeserved grace of God.

I believe there is one universal church, founded on our Lord, Jesus Christ. The church is guided by the Holy Spirit. God calls the church to worship, evangelize, care for all of God's people and creation, and to be a shining light to demonstrate God's love to the whole world.

I believe there are two sacraments that were instituted by Jesus Christ. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into life in Christ. Baptism is not dependent on us. It is all about God. It is an outward sign of an inward grace. In baptism, we become/or come into the family of God and God's church, and it is up to the church family to help and nurture those baptized at all times.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus on the evening he was betrayed. It is a remembrance, a thanksgiving, a communion, and a declaration of faith. The elements represent Jesus' body and blood given as a sacrifice for humankind's salvation on the cross. We celebrate the Lord's Supper with all the saints – past, present, and future.

I believe that Jesus Christ will return physically to earth in great power, glory, and majesty. The dead will be raised bodily and Jesus will sit in judgement over all. The wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment and the righteous will live in eternity with God, worshipping and serving God forever.