

Statement of Faith- Leigh Erdman

1. I believe in the triune God- Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit- whose love sustains the world and whose grace reaches us before we ever know to seek it. I affirm the sovereignty of God, trusting that God's purposes are at work in ways both seen and unseen. God created the world in goodness and calls creation toward justice, healing, and wholeness. Even in a world marked by suffering, division, and injustice, I believe that God remains faithful, continually working toward reconciliation and renewal.
2. I believe human beings are created in the image of God and therefore possess inherent dignity and worth. At the same time, we live within the reality of sin. Sin is both personal and communal; it appears in our individual failures as well as in the unjust systems that shape our common life. I believe we are called to speak honestly about this brokenness, yet proclaim with equal clarity that God's grace is greater still. We are not saved by our own efforts but are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God's mercy meets us where we are and calls us into lives of repentance, transformation, and new possibility.
3. I believe God is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, fully God and fully human. Through his life and ministry, Jesus proclaimed good news to the poor, welcomed those pushed to the margins, and challenged systems that denied the dignity of God's people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and restored those whom society had cast aside. In his death on the cross we see both the depth of human sin and the depth of God's self-giving love. In the resurrection, God declares that death, injustice, and despair will not have the final word. Through Christ we are reconciled to God and invited into a new way of life shaped by grace, humility, courage, and love.
4. I believe Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the Lord of our lives. The church belongs to Christ alone, and our calling is to follow where he leads. As disciples, we are invited to participate in the work of God's reign by practicing compassion, hospitality, justice, and reconciliation. The reign of God is both a present reality and a future hope: it appears wherever barriers are broken down, where dignity is restored, and where communities embody God's vision of mercy and justice. Even when that vision seems distant, we trust that God's kingdom is still breaking into the world in quiet and unexpected ways.
5. I believe the Holy Spirit is active and present in the world today. The Spirit gathers the church, equips believers with diverse gifts, and calls us beyond fear into faithful action.

The Spirit comforts us in sorrow, challenges us when we fall short, and continually draws us closer to God's truth. Through the Spirit the church is always being renewed and reformed according to the Word of God.

6. I believe the Bible is the inspired and authoritative witness to God's relationship with humanity and the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ. In scripture we encounter the unfolding story of God's covenant love across generations. The Bible speaks through many voices- story, poetry, prophecy, lament, and vision- and tells the truth about both the beauty and brokenness of human life. Again and again, scripture reminds us that God hears the cries of the oppressed and calls God's people to pursue justice and mercy. Guided by the Holy Spirit and shaped by the wisdom and tradition of the church, we read scripture together, trusting that God continues to speak through it into our present moment.
7. I believe the confessions of the church serve as faithful witnesses that guide our understanding of the gospel. As part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), I am shaped by the voices gathered in the *Book of Confessions*, which remind us how communities across history have responded to God's Word in the challenges of their own time. The confessions ground us in tradition while encouraging us to listen for how God is calling the church to faithfulness today.
8. I believe the church is called to be the body of Christ in the world- a covenant community formed by grace and sustained by the Holy Spirit. In worship we gather to hear the Word proclaimed, celebrate the sacraments, and be strengthened for service. As Presbyterians, we live this calling through a connectional church that seeks to discern God's will together. Though the church is imperfect, God continues to work through it to proclaim good news, care for those who suffer, and bear witness to God's justice and peace in a broken world.
9. I believe the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs and seals of God's grace. In baptism we are claimed by God and welcomed into the covenant community before we can claim anything for ourselves. In the Lord's Supper, Christ gathers us at the table to remember his life, death, and resurrection and to be nourished for discipleship. The table reflects God's radical hospitality: we come not because we are worthy, but because Christ invites us.

10. I believe that the promise of Christ's return is the promise that God will bring creation to its fulfillment. When Christ comes again, God will bring to fruition the work of reconciliation, judging sin with justice and restoring all things in mercy. The church waits in that hopeful expectation and participates in the ongoing work of healing as a foretaste of what is to come.

My call to ministry grows out of the conviction that God is still at work among us. I have seen glimpses of that work in communities of faith where people care for one another, feed the hungry, seek justice, and extend hospitality in Christ's name. I believe I am called to ministry to help communities listen for the movement of the Spirit, proclaim the good news of God's grace, and participate in God's ongoing work of healing and reconciliation in the world. Even when the path of faith is uncertain, I trust that God continues to lead the church forward with hope.