

McKenna Lewellen
Faith Statement, Fall 2020

1 All theology is rooted in the body of its author; mine unfolds from feminism I bear in my
2 arms, whiteness woven in my skin, queerness in my gut, and disability that sets me on slant. My
3 theology starts with what I know, and what I know first is sin. I carry evidence of patriarchal and
4 queerphobic violence, the length to which white supremacy will go to keep power, and disabling
5 forces in the world and church. I do not know sin as an abstract category; I wear the brokenness
6 and shortcomings of creation in my flesh – in the ways that I have inherited it, that I have fallen
7 short and embraced it, and the ways others' sin remains long after it was struck into me. This
8 stirs a sharp knowing of my dependence on something beyond the boundaries of human capacity.

9 Like Calvin and Schleiermacher, knowledge of the human condition turns me to God. I
10 believe this God is a Triune God – Parent, Son, and Holy Spirit, so coherent we call God “One”
11 and so overflowing the boundaries of space, time, and relationship as we can comprehend them
12 that we call God “Three.” The Trinity begins, sustains, and ends all that is, from hidden corners
13 of the smallest measure of matter to unimaginably distant limits of the cosmos. I believe in God
14 the Parent and Creator, who spun all things out of the deep and into existence, who danced in
15 primordial waters, loves what has become, and intimately shaped and knows creation's End.

16 I believe in God the Son and Savior, true God from true God, one who is fully God and
17 fully flesh, known by us through scripture, story, and creed as Jesus Christ. In an Empire that
18 punished and impaired its people, relied on a social contract of economic oppression, thrived on
19 fear, and anathematized the poor, the disabled, and the foreigner, Jesus was born, lived, taught,
20 healed, and so clearly cast a vision for a just world that the leaders of the Empire executed him. I
21 believe that he died, and still bearing wounds that made him nearly unrecognizable, resurrected
22 in power. I believe that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are enmeshed in the work of the
23 Trinity, and that through this work, we are given the grace-filled gift of salvation, of being knit
24 back together – atoned – to ourselves, our community, and to our God. I believe that Jesus bears
25 good news into this world for this world, and that atonement makes new life possible in creation.

26 I believe in God the Spirit, breath in creation, witness of the unwitnessable, and evidence
27 of God's playfulness, power, and mystery. The Spirit remains with us, stirs in us, and guides us
28 as we join God's work in the world. The Spirit, the advocate that Jesus promised would be with
29 us in his absence, is the guide and founder of the Church.

30 Together, the Church lives, serves, learns, and worships under the direction of the Spirit,
31 by the example of Jesus, and toward the End that God calls us to. We are ordered by what is
32 revealed first in scripture, the lens through which we understand creation, and God's inspired
33 Word for us. This ordering through scripture is preached, clarified through confessions, practiced
34 in democratic polity, tethered to our contexts, and confirmed in the sacraments. The sacraments
35 of baptism and communion are a sign and seal for us, a visible word by which we encounter
36 God's grace in our flesh. They usher us into a life of faith, nourish us as we live together and
37 seek to know God, and root us as we move through the world. As we baptize in the name of the
38 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, Mother of us all, we glimpse a holy community formed
39 by grace and the renunciation of sin. As we gather for a meal of bread and juice, we inhabit
40 God's promise of a world where people from every place and time are nourished by holy food.

41 The Church is called to be a prophetic, missional force in the world. Knowing our sin,
42 God's work, and the promise of a new creation, we join God in building a world where
43 reparation salves wrongdoing, where structures stifling life fall, and where the death of
44 hegemonic evil makes room for resurrection. We follow God's call with the expectation of
45 finding God among us – until Jesus comes again and the mystery of God's promises are fulfilled.