

Re. Kate Kelly      Statement of Faith

I believe in life and death; we belong to God. That also means that those who hold beliefs in stark contrast to our own belong to God and that through the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ, loving them as sisters and brothers will always be required. The Old Testament serves as history to our faith and reflects the common beliefs we share with other faith traditions. Through the Bible, God's grace and God's wrath, destruction are made known to us, as well as forgiveness, grace, and new life. Through the Gospels, the energy, mission, and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth recognizes the haves and the have-nots and mandates us all to "shoov" and orient ourselves to God's path, not the ways of man. On the cross and resurrection, Jesus' death declares that an individual or corporate sin can not snuff out God's liberating message and mandate to love one another. Other portions of the New Testament serve as the foundation of the early church and demonstrates their sincere desire to be faithful in balancing their participation in their community of faith and integration into the ever-changing world around them. As our Tradition teaches, I believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to gather up the church. It is the responsibility of church leadership to discover the gifts of each person delivered to a congregation by the Spirit and discern God's movement in the midst of the community gathered. The role of the church in the world, this world, is changing. Churches no longer serve as places to learn correct beliefs and judge the world around them. Churches are called to foster a sense of belonging with norms and values solidified through mission, non-judgemental inclusion, welcoming diversity, and celebrating community. I believe it's the essential part of our job description to be a source of love and compassion in a broken and sinful world. I give thanks to God for the church's sacraments, visible signs of God's invisible grace made known to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. I believe that it is through the sacrament of baptism that God's daughters and sons are visibly claimed as God's own, and the congregation makes sacred vows to raise each child in the confidence of God's love, compassion, and grace. The Lord's Supper continues to nourish and sustain me to faithfully engage the world in all of its brokenness and celebrate the beauty of creation and new life. It also serves as a reminder that extraordinary things can occur among those gathered for the most common purposes. I believe in the irresistible grace of God, who chases us down like the parent of the prodigal child, and, despite our shortcomings and defeats in life, we remain blanketed with God's love and compassion.