

## Personal Statement of Faith by Brian Spangler

I believe:

There is only one God: the God of the Old and New Testaments, as revealed to Israel and to the Church. We have experienced and seen this God revealed in three persons: The Father, the Son (the Living Word), and the Holy Spirit.

God created the universe and everything in it, and has pronounced pleasure with His creative work. God reigns sovereign over all of creation and calls us to honor it by being faithful stewards of the world and of all His creation.

Unique among the creative work of God is His creation of humanity in His image, and we as humans have a special relationship with our Creator. God had a wonderful plan for us, to be in loving and intimate fellowship with us, but in our sin we have rebelled, alienating ourselves from God.

God did not abandon us; instead God graciously established a covenant of grace with Abram and Sarai extending this covenant to Israel and now to the Church. By this covenant, we receive salvation by believing in Jesus Christ. Because of our sin, we need God to graciously reach out to us, for God to invite us into relationship and to choose to reveal Himself to us.

Our God had a plan to redeem us from our sinful state, graciously seeking to restore us to full communion with Him by reconciling us to Him, and Jesus Christ, His Son, is central to this plan.

Pre-existent, the Word became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Promised Messiah. Jesus, as the Son of God, was both fully human and fully divine. Jesus lived a sinless life and proclaimed the presence of the kingdom of God, proving this reality by exorcising demons, healing the sick, forgiving sins, and calling people to repentance before God. This repentance involves remorse for wrongdoing and a turning from sin to a new life and a turning to Jesus Christ in faith and in obedience.

As the sinless Son of God, Jesus was sent to die on the cross to graciously save us from our sins, to atone for our sins, and to bring us to repentance and belief. Through faith in Jesus Christ alone, we are forgiven of our sins, saved, redeemed, reconciled to and justified by God. We must abandon all self reliance and trust in Christ alone.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to be our Counselor. The grace of God in our lives can be seen by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, irresistibly empowering us to faithfully follow the commands of God, renewing and regenerating us, sanctifying us as we faithfully seek to become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit reveals God's abiding grace and love in our lives.

The Holy Spirit still gives us gifts to uplift the Church and one another. It is our responsibility as the Church to encourage and enhance these gifts in one another's lives.

The Holy Spirit unifies us as believers. There is only one Church and we must always strive to live out the diversity and unity God intends the Church to manifest. We who share faith in Christ, as the Church, must unite around the cross.

The Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, provide the one and only authoritative revelation of the Word of God and are infallible in their teaching about doctrine and practice concerning salvation, as well as in how God desires for us as Christians to live faithful and holy lives.

Scripture shows that God calls both men and women to ministry, as all Christians have a call and vocation to live out their faith and share the Gospel with others. There is a priesthood of all believers, as all Christians are given gifts for ministry and some are also called to specific ministries within the Church, to which they are ordained, or specifically set apart as deacons, elders or ministers.

We are baptized, as adults and infants, into Christ's body as a sign of our inclusion in the New Covenant, and of our new life and new existence in the body of Christ. In baptism, we share in His death and resurrection. We also participate in the experience of communion where with the historic Church we share in the Last Supper of Christ, where the bread and wine symbolize His broken body and shed blood, and His atoning sacrifice for each of us who profess His name as Lord and Savior.

Our existence in Christ graciously results in new life. Our Christian faith calls us to lives of holiness and faithfulness, as we faithfully and joyfully share our faith and hope in Christ with others, as we give glory to God alone, as we eagerly await the return of Christ.