

## **Emily (Emmie) Ferstandig Arnold's Statement of Faith**

I believe in an almighty God who has so much love that a universe was borne of it. We enjoy God and creation through each member of the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father and Creator is the first member of the Godhead. God reaches out to human beings and allows them freedom in receiving this love. God is intimate and makes all of creation new again.

I believe that we have damaged our bonds with God. In the second creation narrative, the first two people followed the voice of a stranger rather than the God who created them. Their relationships with God and each other were divided. We have followed in their footsteps in oppressive systems and actions that elevate some and crush others. God the Father sent Jesus Christ to be the world's bridge-builder and heart-restorer.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son and second member of the Godhead. He came to Earth in a divine and human body and lived, loved, served, died, and rose again for humankind's salvation. He reconciled all people to God on the cross, atoning for our sins and proving that hatred would not overpower love. He ministered to people who were on the margins; invited ruling figures to new understandings of power; and cleansed, forgave, and offered everything for His friends and adversaries. He is the One who sustains the Church.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, who goes where She will, bringing God's love to desperate places, justice to unjust places, wholeness to broken places, and renewal to places of death. She offers discernment and hope to those who desire God's guidance. She helps us to pray by translating our pain, confusion, and joy so we can communicate more fully with God.

I believe that the two sacraments of the Presbyterian Church, baptism and communion, are outward signs of inward grace. Baptism is a public declaration of God's love upon humankind. It serves to build beloved community on Earth and bestows upon us our true identities: Beloved child of God. Communion is bread and cup for the journey. It is a reminder of God's sustaining manna, as well as Jesus' broken body and blood. It unites people in the name of Jesus Christ. The Church's mission of spreading God's love is bolstered by these sacraments.

I believe that the Holy Scriptures are a unique and authoritative way to understand and love God through a lifetime of discipleship. Authors of growing faith communities came together over a thousand years to share their stories of God and what God had done for them. We connect with the saints' stories of stumbling and rising, discern God's movements in the past and present, and join in imagining what God longs for in the future.

I believe that the Church universal is an amalgam of global communities that seek God's face. The mission of the Church is to share and live the Gospel, and Christ empowers us to do this. Within church communities, Christians live a life of discipleship. To be a disciple is to do justice and walk humbly with God, invite others to the same restorative relationship by loving without exception, and participate in God's reformation of broken systems.

I believe that the hope of creation in Jesus Christ is an unbroken promise that leads all of humankind toward God's original vision. There is a future in heaven that holds no more pain or injustice. All things return to what they were supposed to be. God's loving-kindness will join all people together again. This Kingdom of God is not a distant future; we are called to bring it closer to Earth with our words and actions. The love of the Kingdom of God wins.