

Statement of Faith

We are a people longing eagerly for the future

We are waiting for the arrival of a new heaven and earth, which God will bring about through his transforming power. A day is coming when Christ will come again to establish his reign of justice and freedom. He will create the home of righteousness which his people crave, banishing forever sin, Satan and death.

In renewed bodies in a renewed creation, we will live as God's people in unbroken relationship with God and each other. At the centre of everything will be the one God, eternally self-existent as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the creator and sustainer of all that is. His character is constant and his purposes unchanging. He will be all our glory. This will be life as it was meant to be lived – life in all its glorious and satisfying fullness.

We are a people formed decisively in the past

From before the creation of the world, God the Father chose us and blessed us in his Son, Jesus. We depend entirely upon the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, our King and Rescuer. Jesus is God-in-the-flesh, who shares our humanity, having been born of Mary. She conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit while she was still a virgin.

As the Son of God, Jesus came to make God known. As the Servant of God, Jesus came to undo the corruption of humanity and the divine curse on creation caused by the first man, Adam. He came to liberate us from our devastating self-love and to rescue us from the consequences of our ongoing willful refusal to love God and others. Jesus fulfilled the promises made by God to Israel and realised all that Israel was called, but failed, to be. He gave us a glimpse of the world to come, calling the people of God to follow him and to demonstrate the goodness of his rule by their shared lives.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus lived the life Adam and the rest of humanity could not live. And through the Holy Spirit, Jesus died the death that Adam and the rest of humanity deserve to die. On the cross he endured and exhausted God's righteous anger against our rebellion, paying its penalty in full. Jesus rose physically from the dead, proving the effectiveness of his death. The resurrection is the promise and beginning of God's new world. Jesus then returns to his father in heaven, from where he now rules over all creation. He sent his Spirit to apply all that he achieved on the cross. The Spirit equips us as God's people to live for Christ and speak of him so that others might submit to his gracious reign. In this way Jesus sovereignly gathers his church as he rescues those the Father has given him.

We are a people living joyfully in the present

God has given his Spirit and word to his people to equip us to serve him in the world and to bring us to his future.

God the Holy Spirit is the giver of life, the one who convicts of sin and the creator of saving faith. He is the one who opens our eyes to see the beauty of Christ so that through the Spirit we succumb willingly to irresistible grace. He is the one who gives us new hearts to turn to Christ and trust him. The Spirit sets us apart for Christ and makes us more like him through the word of God.

The Holy Spirit is the author and interpreter of the Bible, which is God's word to his world concerning his Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible reflects the characters and circumstances of the people who wrote it, but the Holy Spirit guided the entire process. So in the Bible God reliably reveals his character and plans as he tells the story of his grace in rescuing sinners for his glory. Because it is the word of God, the Bible is the final authority in matters of conduct, questions of life and issues of truth.

We live together in union with Christ as his church. God is littering the world with local expressions of this church. We celebrate our cultural diversity while enjoying unity in Christ. These churches are a means of grace to a needy and dying world. God has given us the task of making the good news of Jesus known to those without God and without hope. Our community life points ahead to what God has in store for his world. So, by word and life, we model and offer reconciliation to those alienated from God by their willful rejection of him. We call people to turn from despising God and urge them to trust in Christ. Without Christ, people face only the judgment of being forever cut off from God and all that is good. It is by grace that we live in the present as forgiven sinners. We never earn the right to be called children of God. The gift of faith hears the 'not guilty' verdict that God will proclaim for his people on the coming day of judgment and enables us to live in the light of it now.

As those welcomed, forgiven and accepted, we become a community of those who welcome, forgive and accept. We respond to the gospel in baptism, expressing that we have become part of the people of God. The Lord's Supper is the meal we regularly share together to celebrate the work of Christ and express that we continue to be part of the people of God together. Our shared life proclaims the Lord's death until he returns to make good the invitation to his eternal banquet.