

Shannon T. Hanson – Statement of Faith

God is the Author and Perfecter of our Faith, the uncreated Creator of all. I affirm the reality of the Trinity – the three in One. God is real. God is present, now and forever. God is.

I know myself as God's precious, beloved and broken child; my life has meaning insofar as I willingly join my story to God's Story. God is the source of my strength. God beckons me home by pushing me forward into God's will for my life.

I ground my faith in the reality that nothing can "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Romans 8:39-NRSV) Christ is Lord and Savior and, through God's infinite and immeasurable grace, through faith, I proclaim that Jesus Christ is *my* Lord and Savior. Jesus' message of love for God and neighbor calls me to risk loving and calls me away from fear and death. Indeed, death has been conquered! I place my hope in the knowledge that Jesus saves the world and me from the spiritual and physical death resultant from sin and, quite personally, from my sin. Sin's grip – which I experience in ways petty and profound – is time bound; my redemption through Christ is not.

God chose, as a free gift, not only to create but to share relationship with God's creation. In the face of the brokenness and pain of this world, Jesus offers hope, joy, and ultimate belonging to those who, in humility, surrender their lives to him. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God is present and acting in this world, both inside and outside the church, towards the fulfillment of God's purposes. Divine revelation is not relegated to the past; the Holy Spirit enlivens the Word for the community of faith today. When I speak of my calling to be a vessel for God's story, I envision the breath of God blowing through me.

The church is the Body of Christ in and for the world insofar as it celebrates and proclaims God's radical grace and demonstrates God's abundant and welcoming kindness and mercy. God's preferred "dance partners" are the lost, the outsiders, and the poor of every age. I stand amazed and humbled by what such a "preference for the poor" says about the nature of God.

Worship is the heart of my life as a Christian, as it is the heart of the church's life. Worshipping as one within the Body of Christ, I seek to adore God and to celebrate God's redemptive action in the world. And as I maintain worship is the heart of Christian life, prayer is the core of worship. Surrendering to God in prayer is running into the arms of Love itself. Prayerful consciousness of my utter dependence upon God grounds me for active engagement with God in God's world.

I celebrate those precious salvific moments I have experienced – moments when the sacred breaks into time, bringing healing and light irrespective of the momentary circumstances. I also trust that God's gracious action seeks connection with all humanity in ways I cannot begin to understand, much less judge. I hope God can use me to share God's grace with others such that they, too, are awed by God's steadfast love.