

1 God is mysteriously the three-in-one God and so we baptize in the name of the
2 Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God created the heavens, the earth, all
3 creatures, and peoples, and called everything created good. God continues to create each
4 day and maintains authority over all creation. People are created with the special purposes of
5 cooperating with God in caring for creation and in relating with all peoples so that everyone
6 may live whole peaceful lives. But like Adam and Eve we all sin, rejecting God and our
7 purposes, leaving us all unable on our own to fully live life. Sin shatters life and relationships.
8 Prodigally, God rejects all our sin, while steadfastly loving all creation. Thanks be to God!

9 God was revealed in history as the person known as Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus came as
10 God's Christ to reveal God to people, to show us how to live as God intends, and to save us
11 from our sin. Uniquely, Jesus lived on earth and he did not sin; he fully cooperated with
12 God and completely fulfilled God's purposes. Jesus' innocent death overcame our sin and
13 liberates us to live life. By this gift we are set free! God miraculously raised Jesus from the
14 dead and promises to raise all people whom by faith believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
15 Jesus' promise gives me hope in living abundantly forever with God, beginning today. Jesus
16 has now gone to heaven where he reigns as Lord over all creation.

17 God has not left us alone. The Holy Spirit, who was in and with Jesus, is also gifted
18 to creation enabling us all to live the liberated life Jesus reveals and God intends. The Spirit
19 dwells in us, giving us the ability to confront and reject sin and to embrace life in service to
20 others. The Spirit worked through people in history to write the scriptures we call the Bible,
21 where the saving message of God's reconciling love is revealed. Today the Spirit guides us in
22 our daily choices, and specifically when we interpret the Bible, and when we read the faithful
23 historical examples of biblical interpretation found in our Book of Confessions. The Spirit
24 remains our companion even if we doubt God and enables us to trust all of God's promises.
25 Through God's Spirit we are members of the Church—God's children, the Covenant
26 community, the body of Christ, a priesthood of believing servants.

27 Jesus gave the Church the two sacraments of baptism and communion. The Spirit
28 uses baptism to show us that God reaches out to us to give us new life in Christ, even before
29 we believe. Baptism signifies that in Christ we are cleansed and sealed by the Spirit and
30 initiated into the Church. Likewise, the Spirit uses the bread and wine of communion as a
31 real meal with Jesus, nourishing all believers. We eat the bread and drink the cup in
32 memory of Jesus' death and to celebrate our relationship with God through Jesus. At the
33 Lord's Supper we proclaim not only Jesus's death but also that he will return to reset all of
34 creation whole and peaceful.

35 Jesus has tasked the Church with learning, living, and sharing God's story with all
36 people. We do this when we prayerfully read the Bible and gather to worship God each
37 week: confess our sins, hear God's story, and respond to God's good news with songs of
38 praise and our tithes and offerings. Equally, we do this in deed and word: in feeding the
39 poor, in clothing the naked, in visiting the sick and jailed, in basically proclaiming God's love
40 for the world and in finding life abundant through Jesus Christ.