

The Reverend Doctor Alison Halsey
Statement of Faith

I believe in God who exists as creator, redeemer, and present sustainer. God, as creator, set the awesomeness of the world in motion and lovingly created humanity in God's own image. This creating, loving parent desired to be in relationship with these special creatures, but being human we had and continue to have our share of failures. We run from our Creator, try to hide, destroy parts of God's creation, laugh at God's vision for us, refuse to obey the law and the prophets, and even seek to play at being God. But God was and is faithful still.

Because of God's loving grace the Creator choose to reveal Godself in human form. Desiring to understand us more fully and because God loves us so dearly God became one of us in the person of Jesus. Living with humanity, Jesus taught us and modeled for us in his words and actions how we might live out our relationship with God and with others. Christ was given to humanity as a gift of God's unconditional and steadfast love. Acceptance of this gift transforms us and gives us life – life in abundance.

The Spirit of God strengthens us and renews us, comforts us and challenges us in this journey of life. Sometimes the Spirit speaks in the whisper of a child, the gentle hug of a friend, or in the words which spring forth from the Bible enlightening our souls. At other times it roars through our humanity knocking down walls which divide us and setting the captive free. God's Spirit cannot be contained nor can it fully be described in human words. It is seen and felt through the eyes of the heart.

The church is the gathered body of God's children who come together in joy to celebrate God's love especially known to us in the person of Jesus Christ. We gather to worship, to give thanks, and to seek individually and corporately how best to respond to this gift of God's love. Welcomed in our baptism, nourished by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and challenged by the Word of God, we seek to reflect God's love to a world which desperately needs to hear of it. The church is therefore the children of God with a mission. Commanded by Jesus to love God and to love our neighbor we seek to minister to the needs of others.

In humility yet with enthusiasm I seek to live out my faith in obedience to God, confident that ultimately God's love will prevail.

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Faith Journey

At age 5 when people asked me what I wanted to be, I responded, “a minister” and that was that. I have always felt called by God to be a pastor and have felt God’s hand on my shoulder guiding me, even to the extent that most of the positions I held, they called me and asked me to apply. It has been and continues to be an awesome and humbling thing to be called by God, for the most part one of joy.

In my formative years I belonged to and participated in a church which was centered on mission and social action, which became near and dear to me in my ministry. I have always sought to accept all people as children of God, no matter what their station in life may be. This has played out over the last 45 years in various ways.

In 1977, I was hired by Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, NY as an Assistant Pastor and thus became the first woman pastor in the Presbytery of Western New York. Since I was the first, I traveled around to various churches and met with sessions urging them to elect women as ruling elders. (ugh, am I that old?) The church also was one of the first churches to become a *More Light* congregation and so began my journey to seek equality in the church for my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. The last called position I held was the pastor of the First and Franklin Presbyterian Church in Baltimore (also one of the first *More Light* churches) which at the time was more than 50% gay and lesbian. We continually sought to be inclusive and sought to change the laws which proclaimed otherwise. Celebrating the changes to our denomination and our country offering them full inclusion and marriage was a real joy.

Nearing the end of my career I enjoyed doing interim ministry. Working with churches to discover their gifts and their calling was great fun. I am a creative, visionary and this fit.

In retirement, I have moderated sessions, done consulting work for New Castle Presbytery, preached a bit, and enjoyed my family and traveling. I continue to fulfil my calling as a volunteer for Planned Parenthood, escorting women on Tuesday mornings and serving as the chairperson of Delaware State Clergy for Choice. I have a hard time struggling with this, after all this time I am back working for the rights of women.

Just as a reminder, lest I forget, I got a tattoo of a Celtic cross on my shoulder where God’s thumb rested all those years and still does.

Jesus said, “I came that you might have life and have it abundantly.” That has certainly been true for me.

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