

# Confirmation Class of 2021



South Mecklenburg  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Confirmation

When we are baptized, we become members of the church of Jesus Christ. As we worship and participate in the life and mission of the church, we are continually nurtured in faith. At an appropriate time in life, when we are developing our own sense of identity, faith, and values, we review what we know about our faith and reflect on the meaning of our faith journey. We recall the stories of our journey and compare them with the stories of faith found in the Bible and in the lives of the people of God in our family, among our friends, and in the church.

Confirmation is a time for serious study about faith, life, and the mission of the church. It is an opportunity to gain greater self-understanding, deepen existing relationships, and develop new ones. These youth, who are members of the 2021 Confirmation Class, have spent a year together reflecting and learning – a year gaining greater understanding of what it means to be faithful Christians. Most amazingly, they participated in this journey throughout a global pandemic, showing their love for Christ by showing their love for one another, practicing flexibility and patience in the midst of virtual classes, masked gatherings, alternative retreat opportunities. No matter how unexpected the circumstances, the underlying journey was the same: confirmation is the time when they can choose to accept for themselves the responsibilities of witness and mission of the church of Jesus Christ.

# South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

## 2020-2021 Confirmation Class

<b>Student</b>	<b><i>Mentor</i></b>
Riley Bahnweg	Geoffrey Lee
Elizabeth Bartholomew	Mary Elledge
Ellie Celones	Ruby Robinson
Kinsley Colson	Karen Sandeen
Riley Cornell	Jeana Lee
Matthew Craft	Eric Smith
George Elledge	Nancy Parrish
Claire Fenton	Sheila McAnally
Margaret Garand	Kathy Graham
Sarah Graham	Donna Podgorny
Liana Hansen	Mandy Godbey
Bennett Holder	Dave Jacobus
Kasia Hurlburt	Adrienne Jaquith
Davis Lee	Laura Hancock
Maisie Macholz	Cara McCoy
Lilly McAnally	Denise Wilcox
Bryson McCoy	Betsey Macholz
Ryan Munoz	Alix Phillips
Laura Neligan	Gayle Ireland
Brett Parrish	Frank Graham
Shay Soderlund	Mary Katheryne Zagora
Joe Wilcox	Craig Parrish
Evan Williams	Ron Stephany

### 2021 Confirmation Teachers

Don Dracon Mandy Godbey Jennifer Hurlburt Adrian Soderlund

## **Riley Bahnweg**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe in God, the creator of everything. I believe that he is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. He is the one who, no matter what we do or say, will always love us and will always forgive us. Over the past year, I have continued to struggle with my faith when it comes to understanding why God would let such terrible things happen to the world and the people closest to me.

I believe in Jesus, the one who made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us. Jesus was brave and selfless when he died on the cross so our sins could be forgiven. I also believe that he did it as an example to show us that we should put others before ourselves and care for them. I find it very easy to connect with Jesus because of my Nana who has been a big part of my faith.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, our guide. I do not know a lot about the Holy Spirit but I believe that she is what helps us determine right from wrong. What helps us make all of our decisions.

To me, being a follower of Jesus means you help others. It means you try and put the well-being of others before yourself. It means that when people are less fortunate than you, you should recognize how fortunate you are and try to give back to them.

I believe that everyone sins. We are all sinners because no one is perfect. Even though we do sin, God will always forgive us, but we should strive to follow the Bible and be the people we can be.

## Elizabeth Bartholomew

### Statement of Faith

I believe that God is nature and that God created nature. I believe God created humans. God does not have to forgive us and love us; God chooses to do that on his own. I believe God does not like sin, but He is forgiving.

I believe Jesus "is the Lamb of God" and that He made it possible for us to receive forgiveness from God. I believe that we, as humans, don't know what we need, but Jesus knows. He will provide for us, maybe without us even knowing. I also believe that nothing can separate us from God's love.

I believe the Holy Spirit is here to care for us. I believe the Holy Spirit can teach you right from wrong. I believe the Holy Spirit can guide you when you don't understand, don't know what to do, and when you are feeling lost.

I think that being a follower of Jesus means to follow Jesus's example. I believe being a follower of Jesus means to be compassionate and kind. I also believe that being a follower of Jesus means to listen to the Holy Spirit and to be obedient because he knows what is right for you.

I believe that the church is all about coming together to share what we as a church believe. Also, I believe the church is waiting for the congregation to engage with each other, to be better Christians, and to do the right thing. I also think the church is a way to have fun and sing songs about faith and love in this world and in heaven.

I believe forgiveness is something we forget to be grateful for. I believe humans are very fortunate to have forgiveness from God because Jesus worked so hard to give it to us. I believe that forgiveness is letting go of the past, and it might be hard, but it feels great once you're not mad at someone anymore. I believe that forgiveness is like a weight getting lifted off your shoulders, when you finally forgive or let go of something you will feel better. I also believe that you might need to ask for forgiveness, sometimes without even realizing. Maybe you did something wrong, that you don't realize until later is something you should be asking forgiveness for.

## Ellie Celones

### Statement of Faith

God is the creator of our existence. He is all powerful and all knowing. He looks over us each and every day. God decides our pathways of life and every single thing we do reflects on us and is done because God has a plan for us. Each step of our lives is done with purpose. God is understanding and sees the battles we go through each day. He reminds us to keep going and to fight those battles with our heads up. He is always present and is there whenever you need him most, and he will always be listening.

Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. Throughout his lifetime, he did great things such as giving his life up on the cross for us. Jesus was crucified for the sins of humanity before he had risen from the dead. Jesus lived his life in guidance from God, and God showed Jesus the right way to live his life meaningfully while still living it fully.

The Holy Spirit is the giver of life. He has been present long before God's creation of the universe. While God used this power, everything was made into the one and only Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit resembles wisdom and fortitude. The Holy Spirit is also known as the spirit of truth and leads you through your pathway of life. The spirit speaks of protection and reassurance. The Holy Spirit is the spirit controlled by God.

To be a follower of Jesus means that we listen to him, hear his thoughts, and speak as if we were speaking to him. Although we cannot live as great of lives as Jesus did, we can try to live in a world where we look up to him in our daily actions. We shall not think of being Jesus, but we shall use our lives to do good and to move forward living under him. I have discovered that following Jesus does not necessarily mean that you have to be always present under the Lord. You should be loyal and honest with yourself about your beliefs.

Sin is going against divine law. In my opinion, sin is not always a bad thing, but it is a lesson. The lesson of sin shows us that we are not all perfect and that we may make some mistakes throughout life and our vision of God may sometimes be clouded. But I have learned that God understands sin and he knows that when we are hurting, it is okay to sin. God will forgive our sins and show us how he will not punish us, but teach us and guide us so we don't live our lives in misery trying to forgive, but live our lives trying to learn.

## Kinsley Colson

### Statement of Faith

John 13:7 "You do not realize now what I am doing, but someday you will understand." This is a Bible verse that has always stood out to me, because it serves as a reminder that my future is in God's hands, and no matter the hardships I go through, God has a plan that I can't see yet. God created me and He knows my thoughts, actions, and true intentions. He has given the world His guidelines to follow and live by. We are saved by His grace through our faith.

Jesus Christ is the son of God, sent to earth by God to save the world from their sin by dying for us on the cross. He came to earth in the form of a human while being part spiritual. He served as an example to the earth of God's love for us.

The Holy Spirit is God within us. He guides us and calls us to follow God. I believe that being a follower of Jesus doesn't always mean we are a perfect Christian, but that we build a relationship with him and follow His commands even though we will make mistakes in our walk of faith.

Being a member of a church means we are called by God to direct others in God's ways and help each other in times of need. God has a purpose and plan for those who follow Him and he simply calls us to be patient and trust His ways.

# Riley Cornell

## Statement of Faith

I believe God is our creator. God has created us with a vision of who he wants us to be. I believe God is loving and forgiving. We are children of God and are loved. We are forgiven for mistakes as we better ourselves. I believe God is the maker of Heaven. God has created an eternal afterlife so we can join him after death.

I believe Jesus Christ is a way we can see and understand God. By following and accepting Jesus, we are truly following and accepting God. I believe Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He sacrificed himself so we could seek forgiveness for our wrongdoings. I believe Jesus walked on the Earth with us. Jesus was born into our world as the Son of the Father. Jesus was able to understand our lives and our actions which led to him sacrificing himself on the cross for us.

I believe a follower of Jesus should be forgiving. Since Jesus sacrificed himself to gain forgiveness for us, we should learn from this and offer forgiveness to those around us. I believe a follower of Jesus should help the community. Jesus has set many examples of helping others in the Bible. He helped many people in struggle, and we should do the same since less fortunate people in our community could use our help. I believe a follower of Jesus should do what is right. Jesus sacrificed himself so we would be forgiven for our sins. As a follower of Jesus, we know right from wrong and should avoid sin.

I believe every Christian feels the Holy Spirit as a presence in their lives. Once we accept God and Christianity into our lives the Holy Spirit becomes a part of our everyday lives. I believe the Holy Spirit helps us understand and interpret God's vision for us. To understand what God wants from us, we need signs and a helping hand. The Holy Spirit allows us to interpret these signs to understand God's vision. I believe the Holy Spirit gives us a nagging feeling to do what we think is right and to feel bad for our sins. The Holy Spirit, along with experience, causes us to know right from wrong, and the Holy Spirit is what causes us to choose right instead of wrong.

**Riley Cornell**  
**Statement of Faith (continued)**

I believe everyone deserves forgiveness for their sins. Being human, we make mistakes and when we are forgiven we can learn from them. Once we have been forgiven, we can learn to forgive others. I believe forgiveness should come from God, the Church, and the members of the Church. Being Christians, we all have a connection to the Holy Spirit. We have a sense of what God would want us to do, which we use to forgive others. I believe forgiveness causes peace. Being forgiven gives us a sense of relief and resolution. But forgiving others, the harder part, allows us to let go of the grudge we held against the one who has wronged us.

My personal applications of these Christian fundamentals have occurred without my realization at those moments, but were later understood in reflection. I felt that God was close to my family when my sister was recovering from her concussion. I felt that Jesus was there after each argument I had, pressing me to apologize. And I regularly feel the Holy Spirit encouraging me to help others to the best of my ability. I have learned a lot about myself and my faith throughout my Christian upbringing and my confirmation journey. I plan to fulfill God's vision for me and to keep learning about my faith.

## Michael Craft

### Statement of Faith

I start my faith journey with the question, who is God? I think God is something more than a person, he is a supreme being. He is the creator of all and mighty. Even how bad we are, God forgives us.

Next on my faith journey is Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus Christ is the human version of God. He is caring and loving. He showed the road that humans have to walk. He loves all and is extremely unselfish. I believe that the Holy Spirit is with us all the time and with us all the way through our lives.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the giver of life and will always be with us. I believe that God is the Supreme Being and Jesus Christ is the son. Jesus Christ is the closest thing that we will ever get to God. And the Holy Spirit is with us to help and to guide us through our journey. I believe that God helps us through our lives and has a plan for us. What I think it means to be a follower of Christ is to be someone that follows the Word of the Lord.

## George Elledge

### Statement of Faith

I have been going to church for as long as I can remember, but my beliefs with God/Jesus Christ have always fluctuated a bit. Since going through confirmation my relationship has gotten a lot stronger with them.

On the topic of God, I believe that he is real, and he does have a plan for everyone. I also believe he does love all of his children no matter what they have done. I am confused on why he goes about the way he goes about things. Finally, the few things that I do not believe about God are the specific details about things that are done that are proved wrong by science, such as the Virgin Mary giving birth to the Baby Jesus.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has spread the word of God and risked his life for ours. I do believe that he will one day return and continue the word of God. I am confused on why he was so willing to give up his life and show mercy on those who some people believe didn't. One thing I do not believe about Jesus Christ is that he left 2021 years ago. The way I interpret the Bible scriptures is that they were written more than 2000 years ago.

The Holy Spirit is one of the most confusing topics to talk about. I believe it is like a conscience, in a way. That it is always with us, sometimes we may feel guilty about the things it sees, or grateful we have one at all. The entirety of the Holy Spirit just confuses me. Some things that I do not believe are real about the Holy Spirit are that it is in connection with God and Jesus Christ. In sermons, it is not heavily talked about, so it is hard to think it is in connection with the two.

What I think of being a follower of Jesus, is that you spread the word of God. It also means realizing Jesus for what he really is, as the Messiah of God the Father.

When talking about sin, I believe that you can have or create sins through bad actions, and it is possible to be punished for them. I am confused on how one can be judged in the eyes of others and or God. And finally, I do believe in sin so I don't have anything to not believe in.

When talking about forgiveness I feel that God can and does forgive anyone he wants to. He loves everyone and believes in second, third, and fourth chances, and so on. I am confused on how he is so willing to forgive everyone. Finally, I do not believe that we as human beings will know when God or if God forgives our sins.

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## George Elledge

### Statement of Faith (continued)

Finally, on the Scripture. I believe that it is a source of God's existence. I also believe it does reflect the events that we are told of. Some things I am confused about is why are there so many different versions of it throughout the different religions. Some things I do not believe about the Scripture is that it is told the same through all the different religions and that it was written and preserved for this long.

Matthew 6:30 "Wherefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" This reading is showing that God cares deeply about his sons even though it may not appear that he does. Overall, my belief with God and the Messiah is that I do believe and want to believe in them but there are many factors that set back my beliefs. Even with these factors I will continue to learn and spread the word of God whenever I can.

## Claire Fenton

### Statement of Faith

I believe God is the creator of everything seen and unseen. God is the voice above the clouds, watching over all of his creations. God is the immortal being and the eternal force of creation. He is a silent observer that provides what we need to solve our own problems. This is the original form of God.

I believe Jesus is God on earth, the physical form of an intangible being. Jesus came to Earth in an attempt to restore us, lead us away from temptations, and guide us back to God. Jesus is the role model for humanity and the example God wants us to follow for who to be in our own lives. This is the form of God we see.

I believe the Holy Spirit is a moral compass or conscience. The Holy Spirit is the quiet member of the Trinity, not in the spotlight but just as important as its counterparts. The Holy Spirit is the member we come in contact with the most, even if we don't realize its subtle influence on our lives. This is the form of God we feel.

I believe that being a follower of Jesus means living our lives serving others and improving humanity. Following Jesus is not about being perfect, rather trying to do all the good you can. Following Jesus means serving others for the sake of doing what is right, not for glory. It means doing the thankless tasks that someone must and the simple tasks that brighten others' lives.

I believe that the Church is a community of believers in the Lord. It is a place of love and acceptance for all the people that enter, regardless of the individual discrepancies between their beliefs. The Church's purpose is to go about following Acts 10:38, "doing good and healing all those who were oppressed".

## Margaret Garand

### Statement of Faith

Who is God? I believe that God is the creator of everything seen and unseen. To me God is someone who knows more about me than I know myself. God is a listener and cares deeply about me. I experience God the most through nature. Sunrises and sunsets are all creations of God. I feel the closest to God during quiet, dark thunderstorms at night. The mystery and movement of God is to show himself in any way that you need.

Who is Jesus Christ? I believe that Jesus Christ is God with us. He shows the sacrifice all the time. Jesus Christ showed us the way of how we should be and live life. I believe, like Jesus, everyone should be treated fairly and equally. Jesus is self-giving, involved, and always makes himself known. To me, he is the fullest expression of the life that God gives to us. Jesus Christ has a big demand for justice and is God's willingness.

Who is the Holy Spirit? I believe that the Holy Spirit is God's awakening power. She inspires us to see God. The Holy Spirit draws us into a relationship and bond with God. The Holy Spirit is the peace in chaos or the butterflies that you get in your stomach. The Holy Spirit gives me courage to pray and read my Bible, in order to improve my relationship with God. It is the spark that connects you to others.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? I believe that to be a follower of Jesus you must show kindness to others. You can do this by smiling, speaking to a stranger when you pass by, reaching out to others to check on them, and complimenting their outfit. To be a follower of Jesus you must be devoted like the Bible says. You can be devoted by showing commitment to someone or something. I believe that to be a follower of Jesus you must be faithful. Trust that Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are watching over you to keep you safe and trust that God will forgive your sins.

What does Prayer mean? I believe that prayer is my personal time to connect with God. I can pray at any time and any place. I believe that you can pray and connect with the Lord in any way that you need. I believe that when you pray God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all listening to you. In prayer, I think that you should confess and be as honest as you can with yourself. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all there to support you.

## Sarah Graham

### Statement of Faith

Being a follower of Jesus means to be loving and accepting of everyone. Following Jesus does not look like judging others. I feel like some Christians judge other people just because they might not believe in God. Following Jesus is not just staying home and reading your Bible, it is living and experiencing the life and world that God created. I understand reading the Bible is important, but it is not everything. I think God is too complex for words, but if I tried to describe him in words, I would describe him as good and admirable.

I think the church calls us to help other people and tell them about God if they want to listen. I believe that sin is a normal thing that all of us are going to do because we are imperfect people and God created us with free will. Although sin is a normal thing, Jesus came to show us how to live. I think some Christians think they are sinless people and can judge people just because in their eyes they are the perfect ones. I think that some people take what scripture says and believe it word for word, but I think humans wrote and it was inspired by God, so that we can all interpret the Bible in different ways and share those ideas.

I do not know exactly who God is and what they are, but I know they love everyone. I believe Jesus is God in human form and a prophet. The Holy Spirit confuses me the most. I know it is always there, but I don't understand it.

## **Liana Hansen**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe in the God of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. I believe God is our savior. God will show God when God feels it is best fit. I believe God is not a girl or boy. God is whoever you believe God to be. I believe that God is not just one skin color. The Almighty God is God of all and we are we. I believe that God will help you get through tough moments, even if God is not standing there right in front of you and even if you cannot see God. God is still there guiding you through the right path.

I believe Jesus Christ is supportive, loving, and caring. Jesus will be made known when Jesus sees that it is best. Jesus will walk through your problems every step of the way. Jesus Christ will always be there to listen when you need him the most. I believe Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead.

I believe the Holy Spirit is someone who empowers us to do what is right in the situations. I believe the Holy Spirit will step in when it's best to. I believe the Holy Spirit is not a certain gender or race. I believe the Holy Spirit is who you believe the Holy Spirit to be.

I believe being a follower of Jesus means that you believe Jesus knows what is best for you. In the situation you are in you will go to Jesus for guidance knowing that the answers will be given. You go to Jesus for the answers and come back with them sometimes not getting what you like but what is the best for the situation.

Sinning is part of being a human. God knows that grace is always there for us and will give us forgiveness. Sometimes you know you do not need forgiveness, but you get it anyways. We sin everyday not knowing we are sinning. It is important that we confess our sins to God so God knows we know what we did was bad.

Prayer is the way of talking to God. You can always pray anytime anywhere. Prayer does not mean you will always get what you pray for sometimes the things that you pray for are not what you need or what you are ready for. When we pray we are acknowledging God and putting our trust and belief in God.

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**Liana Hansen**  
**Statement of Faith (continued)**

The church is the people who have the same beliefs. And helps people in need. Church is a safe haven and a place to socialize with friends. The church is for the community. The church is a place to learn, play, and explore your beliefs. The church is a safe place for people to go to with any needs. It is somewhere you can be yourself and connect with others. It's important to worship God because we can show him how much we appreciate him and thank him for all he has done.

God's grace is for everyone. Never forget that you are loved by God just the way you are. Grace is free to give and get.

## **Bennett Holder**

### **Statement of Faith**

I knew I wanted to follow Jesus when I started confirmation. Before confirmation I was a little shaky on what and who I wanted to believe in. Now, multiple months into confirmation, I am 100% sure about who I want to believe in.

I knew that I had more questions about God after our third confirmation call. I thought that confirmation was going to be a waste of time until we started talking about sin and about everything that God can do for you by just having a conversation with him. Confirmation has really changed my life and gotten me a lot closer to God. God is now my family, loving friend, best friend, and a close person.

God to me is like one of my friends that I can talk to. I can confess things to him that I would not want to confess to anyone else, and he will always forgive me. Me and God have a great relationship because we talk multiple times a day.

Jesus, also known as Jesus Christ, is the son of God. Jesus died on the cross for our lives, which goes to show that he is not a selfish person and cares about others. I really hope that Jesus makes a return to earth someday because I really would like to meet him.

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Holy Trinity. It is where God's continued presence on Earth and the third Person of the Holy Trinity. A follower of Jesus is also called a disciple. Disciples are followers of something or someone who follows along with something or someone. I am a disciple of God because I follow God. I believe in God, and I want to be confirmed. God will always be there for me and love me.

## **Kasia Hurlburt**

### **Statement of Faith**

Who is God? I believe that God is powerful, like a person with strong muscles and a strong spirit. I believe that God is almighty and has unlimited power. God is good, and he's a nice guy.

Who is Jesus Christ? I believe that Jesus Christ is a man that walked on the earth and that helped people, good people and bad people. And he helped people who are sad and unpopular. And he was very smart and he was good.

Who is the Holy Spirit? I believe that the Holy Spirit is invisible and that the Holy Spirit can be a man or a woman. The Holy Spirit works in the lives of the believers.

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? Following Jesus Christ means you will follow in his footsteps, and you will be a good person. This means helping people like making sandwiches for Operation Sandwich. And when you follow Jesus, you learn more about him. Finally, it means loving other people even if you don't like them.

I believe baptism is when a pastor walks around with a baby after putting water on their faces. They also baptized the baby in the name of the Son the Holy Spirit and the Father. The pastor gives his speech. The congregation agrees to help the baby to grow in his/her faith.

## Davis Lee

### Statement of Faith

I believe that God is the Maker of Heaven and Earth. I believe that God has given his only son to save us. I believe that, as a Christian, after we die we will ascend into heaven and live an eternal life. I believe that everyone has to take their own journey to become one with God, but throughout that journey, there are challenges that lead us to sin, and although sins are bad, I believe that God forgives us when we do sin.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. I also believe that if I'm having a bad day, or I'm becoming frustrated about something, I can turn to Him to make me feel better. I believe that Jesus is in my heart at all times and looks over me while I make my decisions.

I believe that the Holy Spirit guides me while I make decisions in my life, just like being confirmed. I think that I have a better relationship with the Holy Spirit because I have had many times in my life where I could have made a bad decision, but I didn't because I knew it wasn't the right thing to do, and I was scared of the consequences. I think that the Holy Spirit guides me to be the best Christian I can be during my journey.

What I think it means to be a follower of Jesus is to live my life as He did. For example, sharing God's word with others, like Jesus did, as well as treating others equally. I also think it's important to help others the same way Jesus did. Some ways I can express this is by giving the less fortunate clothing, food, and even giving my own time to pray and reach out to others.

I believe that the church is a place where people won't feel judged. It's also a place where people can come to glorify God together as a congregation. Through communion, we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us of giving his own life to save our sins. I am thankful for the opportunity to become a member of the church and am excited to see where my relationship with God takes me.

## Maisie Macholz

### Statement of Faith

I believe God is the creator, God is almighty, God is omniscient, and most importantly, God is omnipotent. I believe God knows all, sees all, and is all. I believe God is a spirit that watches over me forever and always. I believe God is so magnificent, there is no word great enough to describe him, but only states of letters that can somewhat tell just how amazing he is.

I believe Jesus Christ is the son of God. I believe Jesus Christ was put on earth by God to save us, and, in a way, he did. I believe Jesus Christ let us know that God really is watching over us. I believe Jesus Christ helped us understand just how much God loves each and every one of us because he was willing to put his own son on earth to save us.

I believe the Holy Spirit is a person that convicted the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. I believe the Holy Spirit is a person that lives in God's people and gives them the power to trust and obey Jesus Christ.

I believe being a follower of Jesus means to love your enemies, to love your neighbors, not to judge others, to be humble, to follow the Golden Rule, and most importantly, to worship God with all your heart.

I believe forgiveness is a very special thing. I believe everyone deserves a second chance. I believe forgiveness allows us to break those chains of thought that have been weighing us down. I believe you should always forgive people because it will never hurt you but only make the other better.

## **Lillian McAnally**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe that God is the Creator of the world. He created light and darkness. He is the one who created the ocean and land. He created the plants and animals. He is the one who created us and our lives.

I believe that Jesus is the Healer and Savior of the world. He is the one who showed us how to have love and grace. He is the one who taught us how to be God's children. He is the one who died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is in us and guides us. The Holy Spirit is the little voice in our head who tells us what to do and how to do it. The Holy Spirit is the one who guides us through life.

I believe the church is called to spread the Word of God. By showing us that God created the world and us. Along with the example of love and grace that Jesus taught us to live by. The church also shows us that the Holy Spirit is inside of us and to listen to what it is saying.

I believe being a follower of Jesus means to live by Jesus's example of love and grace. You respect everything that God created. You listen to what the Holy Spirit inside of you is saying.

## Bryson McCoy

### Statement of Faith

Who is God? To me, God is many different things and you can't put one label on him or identify him in just one description. From the Bible, we typically know him as the creator of everything. He created everything in this world from trees to lakes to human beings. God is the father of Jesus and the most powerful being there is. Adding on, he loves everyone and doesn't judge, no matter what. He is always there for everyone to support them and give unconditional love even when we sin or make mistakes. God is always there behind us and knows what our path will look like in life. He answers our prayers and controls everything that happens through the good and the bad.

Who is Jesus? The first thing I think of when I hear Jesus's name is the moment when he sacrificed his life for us on the cross. He is the expression of God on earth. Jesus is brave in everything he does and very faithful towards God. Also, much like God, Jesus is very loving, kind, and humble. He will do anything for others even if it means sacrificing something important to him. He guides us in our path in life and is very loyal. Not only did he give his life for us on the cross, but he gave Bread and Wine, representing his body for forgiveness of sins. This brought unity to the people and this overall represents who he is.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the spark inside of us that inspires us to do something. I have heard many different stories from many different people sharing their experiences with God and how God got them out of a rough time by showing them Christianity. This to me is the Holy Spirit speaking to them and overall what the Holy Spirit represents. The spark that gives us the motivation to help or change the world from small to big ways. The Holy Spirit is there to comfort us and let us know God is always with us.

## Bryson McCoy

### Statement of Faith (continued)

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? To be a follower of Jesus, it means you go to church when you can make it and when you are there, you worship the Lord by saying prayers and asking for forgiveness of sins. Outside of church, being a follower of Jesus is embracing Jesus's traits as a human being and showing loyalty, love, and humbleness, which represents being a good Christian. Also, being a follower of Jesus means you pray to God at least every night, praying for not only yourself and family members, but also others including friends and even strangers.

What do you believe about prayer? First off, I believe in praying at least once a day whether it be at the beginning of dinner, before you go to bed, or both. When praying, I think about the things I am thankful God and Jesus have done for me, and the things I hope he can fix or help in the future for family and friends. I believe that God hears our prayers both during worship and outside of worship and tries his best to handle the situation. That also shows why bad things happen when God is looking over us and answering our prayers. I believe bad things still happen when God is answering prayers because most of the time there will always be a positive lesson or experience even if it just means the experience builds character. Prayer is overall the way we can talk to God.

## Ryan Muñoz

### Statement of Faith

I believe that God is the creator. I believe he is all powerful, all knowing, and he knows us better than we know ourselves. As Luke 12:7 says, he knows the number of hairs on our head. I believe he is unconditional love. He will always love us because we are his children. He loves us even though we are not perfect and we sin.

I believe Jesus Christ is God with us. I believe he is an expression of God's love and is God's gift to us. I believe that Jesus is God, but he is also human. He breaks boundaries by eating with sinners, touching lepers, and washing his disciples' feet.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is always around us. She is the one who is with us while we are praying and is with us at all times during our lives. The Holy Spirit is the one who helps us do God's will. She guides us in our lives and helps us live in his image. I believe the Holy Spirit is God working through us. The Holy Spirit is with us when we serve God, and in the small moments that can really make a difference, like just being nice to someone.

For me, to be a follower of Jesus means to be someone who helps others. We can do this from volunteering to just praying for others who are in a bad spot. We are committed to serving him and God first, not some other god or an idol, like the ten commandments say. I believe to be a follower of Jesus you need just to be honest with him. He knows we sin, and we need his forgiveness. To be a follower of Jesus is also to try to live in his image. We aren't perfect like him, but we can try to follow him and his footsteps.

I believe that the purpose of the church is to spread God's love. We can do that by volunteering and helping people in need and by just praying for people. I believe that spreading his love can be done by spreading his word, so we should try to spread his word, in other countries to our neighbors.

## Laura Neligan

### Statement of Faith

Who is God? First of all, God is our creator. He created mankind in his own image. In Genesis, it says he created both male and female. God gave his followers the Ten Commandments and asked them to obey them in order to show their faith. God gave his son Jesus Christ to us. God loves us and forgives our sins.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is God's son who is part of the Holy Trinity (God=Father, Son=Jesus, Holy Spirit). Jesus came to our world to preach to us. He ultimately died on the cross but he is called the Redeemer because he died for OUR sins and the sins of the world.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is a source of wisdom and knowledge. The Holy Spirit is God's spirit in the lives of his believers. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and he will give eternal life to believers.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? I believe that Jesus shared important lessons to his followers. To be a follower of Jesus, I have to practice love, sharing, listening, and service to others. I also should continue to learn about all the events in Jesus' life.

What do you believe about forgiveness? Just before Jesus was crucified, he showed us what it means to forgive by saying "Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34) For me, forgiveness means understanding that people are not perfect, and everyone makes mistakes. Forgiveness means finding better ways to solve problems in a positive manner.

## **Brett Parrish**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe God is forgiving. Even when you do something that you know is wrong, he always forgives you no matter what. I also believe God is a planner. What I mean by this is that he has a plan for all. Even when I feel that he couldn't have possibly wanted this for me, I remind myself that everything happens for a reason and that he has a plan. Finally, I believe God is loving. God loves everyone no matter who they are. Whatever you do and whomever you are God loves everyone equally.

I believe Jesus is our savior. He sacrificed his own life so that we may have eternal life. I believe Jesus is the Son of God who was sent as the one chosen by God to save us from our sins. Jesus sacrificed his life to save us all. He didn't die on the cross to save some of us. I know Jesus is loving, and respecting. He saved us all and therefore I believe he loves and respects us all for exactly who we are.

I believe the Holy Spirit is always there. We may not always be able to see it, but I know that it is with us wherever we go. I also believe that the Holy Spirit is a guide. The Holy Spirit is always around us and I believe leads us down our path of life and guides us into what we are meant to do. Like God, I believe the Holy Spirit will be with you no matter your pathway in life. We will not always make the best decisions, but the Holy Spirit will be with you in times of good and in times of bad.

As a follower of Jesus, I believe it is our job to love and respect others as God and Jesus do to us. I believe we must love others no matter who they are, and we must not judge them based on their identity. As a follower of Jesus, I believe we must spread the word of God in our community by helping in any way we can. Whether it's big or small it is our job to help out. Similarly, as a follower of Jesus I think it is most important to love your neighbor as yourself and treat others the way you want to be treated. Even if you don't agree with them all of the time.

~ continued ~

**Brett Parrish**  
**Statement of Faith (continued)**

Finally, as a Christian I believe one of the most important things is forgiveness. As humans we are far from perfect and we will sin even when we don't mean to. But, as a follower of Jesus and as a creation of God I think it is important to forgive friends, family, and even strangers. Ephesians 4:32 states "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Whenever we make mistakes, God always forgives us, so we must do the same to others as we would want to be done to ourselves.

I am still not totally sure what I believe about God, Jesus, The Holy Spirit, or about being a Christian but my faith journey has only just begun, and I am eager to see my faith continue to grow in the future.

## Shay Soderlund

### Statement of Faith

Who is God? God is someone we can go to anytime; he is our creator and whether we are dead or alive we are his. He is the creator of the earth too. God can help you search out your path because our Lord knows us completely. He helps us through his passion for humanity and forgives us for our sins. God is in us. Feeling our pulse in our bodies, then another pulse behind that, and another pulse behind that one which is God. God cares about who we are and what we think, create, and do. Each one of us is valuable to God, and all are loved by God.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus was and is through the Bible a teacher. He taught/teaches us how to praise the Lord. He was also a healer. There are many stories in the Bible of Jesus healing like Matthew 9:35, "Jesus traveled among all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness." Jesus Christ is our redeemer and another person we can go to in good times and bad. Prayers are sent up to him and God every day. Jesus died on the cross so that we will be forgiven for our sins.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is a spiritual guide representing our Lord and can lead us to be a follower and is always everywhere. The Holy Spirit is one to pray to. People can be inspired by the Holy Spirit like David in Mark 12:36. The Holy Spirit works through us by showing peace, kindness, and goodness.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? To be a follower of Jesus is to see him as our leader. Jesus is the depiction of wisdom and by following him we can make smart choices and not judge people knowing everyone makes mistakes. To follow Jesus is considered an honor. Every human and creature was created by God. Jesus was placed on the right hand of God making him close to the one we look up to.

What do you believe about? Forgiveness - We are taught to forgive people just like God forgives us. I have been taught that we all sin, we are all saved through the forgiveness of our sins. Also, if you change your heart and life for the forgiveness of sins you will live in the house of the God forever.

## Joe Wilcox

### Statement of Faith

I believe God is the creator. God is the being that put us on this earth. God is someone we look up to and worship. God is someone who we look up to when we need guidance.

I believe Jesus Christ is someone who took their life for the better being of other people. Jesus was someone who was represented as "perfect" and someone who never sinned. Jesus Christ represented someone who had no bad bone in his body and would care for others. I believe he sacrificed himself on the cross to forgive us of our sins.

I believe the Holy Spirit is something that surrounds us. It is something that stays with us no matter what. Whether or not we're having a bad day or a good day the Holy Spirit will always be with us and flow through us.

I believe being a follower of Jesus means following after what he did for the short time he stepped foot on this earth. It means to care for others as he did. It means to put your faith in God and trust in him.

I believe the church building itself does not matter. The part that does matter is the people who inhabit the building. The community worshiping God is what makes up the church.

## **Evan Williams**

### **Statement of Faith**

Who is God to me? God to me is a kind, big, gracious soul that lives in our hearts. I believe that he is the one who controls earth and takes care of everyone on his earth. Another thing I think God is, is he tells people it is time to come home to him, and he is so gracious.

Who is Jesus Christ to me? Jesus Christ to me is a human like us but was not afraid to speak the word of the Lord. Jesus sacrificed his own life to let us be happy. I feel he brought everyone closer together to be like one big family.

Who is the Holy Spirit? I don't know a lot about the Holy Spirit but what I do know is that it is a spirit that takes our sins and forgives us. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the Lord and Giver of Life.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? I believe that being a follower of Jesus is to do the right thing and believe in God and Jesus. Another thing to be a follower of Jesus is to quote his Scripture, go to church, and just live life.

What do you believe about The Church? I believe that the church is where people come to forgive their sins, learn about God and to listen to the word of the Lord.

# Our Mission...

to seek God's will for our lives,  
joyfully responding to the Good News of Jesus Christ,  
with Love and Grace.



Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Rev. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Jessica Tidwell-Weinzierl, Director of Youth Ministry