

## **John Ritchie**

### **Statement of Faith**

God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-is made known to us in the actions of creation, redemption and new life. In the creation, God's love is seen in all we have been given: the breath of life, food, clothing, shelter, companionship and purpose. As stewards of God's creation, we are responsible to care for and protect this world, even as we use it to sustain life. Through the redemptive acts of Jesus, my Lord and Savior, God's mercy is seen in forgiveness and acceptance. Through Christ's death on the cross and victory over death evidenced by the empty tomb, my acts and thoughts of sin and evil have been washed away. As Jesus brings me into God's presence, I know I am accepted as a forgiven sinner. Through the Holy Spirit, God's breath of new life empowers me to be open to God's purpose and strengthens me to live into that purpose.

The Bible is God's inspired written word. While the Bible was written to specific people, times and situations; God's message is fresh and meaningful to each generation.

The Church is the body of Christ in the world today. As such, we gather to worship and for discipleship, then we go, being sent into the world to proclaim Christ as Lord and Savior, and to show God's love for all people.

In our worship of God, we humble ourselves knowing that God has called us together to sing praises, confess and experience forgiveness, listen to and talk with God, and hear and dwell on God's word. Worship is not only a weekly action we do as the community of God, worship is also a way of life. Songs of praise should be ever on our lips, prayers should infiltrate our action; God's Word should guide our thoughts, and God's will should direct what we do.

The Sacraments shape and guide our lives. We respond to God's claim on us through Baptism. As the Holy Spirit cleanses us and gives us life, water and the many ways we use water, reminds us of that cleansed life. Communion nourishes us as a community brought together and given life and eternal life by the death of Jesus on the cross, the giving of Christ's body to pay for our sins and the shedding of Christ's blood to give us life, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. As we partake together, we remember Christ's life, death and resurrection, we give thanks for Jesus being active in our lives, looking forward to joining Jesus and the Saints at the heavenly banquet table.

The Mission of the Church is to live into God's will and purpose. One part of that mission takes us outside the church walls, into our communities. While in our communities we feed and give drink to the hungry and thirsty, we welcome the stranger and clothe the naked, we care for the sick and visit the imprisoned. The other part of our mission ensures we look after one another. Encouraging our brothers and sisters as they struggle with doubt, helping them in their time of struggle, praying for them and encouraging them as they use their gifts in ministry, while at the same time appreciating them for their service to God.