## Getting Started: A Statement of Faith

### GOD
- What is your image of God?
- What is your image of God when you were younger?
- Has it changed? How has it changed?
- Why has it changed?
- We have talked about a lot of images for God in scripture: what are some images you remember, ones that most resonate with your faith?
- The Bible say so much about God. Psalm 119 says that God’s word in Scripture is like honey, sweet to taste. What role does/can/should the bible play in your life?
- What promises of God do you rely on in your life?

### CHRIST
- How would you tell the story of Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection?
- What is the most important part of Jesus’ story, in your opinion? Why?
- How was Jesus like God?
- How was Jesus like humans?
- How is Jesus with us now?

### HOLY SPIRIT
- How would you talk about the Holy Spirit? (a flame, a dove, a wind, the healing presence, the water of life, the peace that passes all understanding – there are so many images of the Holy Spirit in scripture and Christian tradition)
- What is the trinity? How does the trinity help you understand the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

### A BEAUTIFUL WORLD
The world is beautiful: starlit nights, the tiny delicate springtime flowers pushing up through the last snow, the rich warm colors of summer, the crisp autumn leaves, the kindness of a friend, the love of family, the miracle of a society where children can go to school and great-grandmothers are taken care of in their last days.
- Where is God in the midst of the world’s beauty? (creator, co-creator, inherent in creation?)
- How do you say, “Thank you” to God for the beauty of the earth? (prayer, acts of kindness, making lists of all the things you are thankful for?)

### A TROUBLED WORLD
The world is beautiful, but also troubled: suffering, violence, broken relationships, environmental destruction, small troubles in our everyday lives and huge troubles across the globe:
- How does God intervene in the suffering of the world? (healing, hope in a hopeless situation, wholeness amid suffering, a presence of peace in the midst of war, an inspiration to help one another?)
- How does God call us/you to intervene in the suffering of the world?
- What role does forgiveness play in your faith? (God’s forgiveness, and/or us forgiving one another)

### A FAITHFUL RESPONSE
- What gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose?
- What life events and/or people have most influenced how you see the world?
- If you could pick three events that most influenced your faith journey, what would they be?
- How do you hope to live differently because of your faith?
- What doubts linger alongside faith (sometimes doubt is a faithful response, yes?)

### A GATHERED CHURCH
- What does our church do in the world that is helpful?
- Why do you come to church?
- What are your experiences of your church? How have you participated in worship, friendships, and service at Kenilworth Union Church?
- How do you hope to be active in this church (or other churches) in the future? Why might you come to church once you are an adult?
Faith Statements are Normal

A faith statement is an attempt to put into words our understanding of who God is and who we are in relation to God. Humans have been talking about God since the invention of language, and we have been writing faith statements since the invention of the written word. In the Christian tradition, this primarily means talking about God in and through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This means talking about the birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It can also mean talking about your experiences in Christian community – as a child, growing up, and in the ups and downs of life.

You could write a faith statement every year for the rest of your life, and you’d probably write something different every time. That’s fine. That’s human, actually. Your faith statement will be your own – a testimony to you as you are now, and a testimony to the way you know God now.

Your statement of faith is your way of talking about God.

It can have a theme…

it can have some questions…

it can use some personal parts…

it can be a letter to the dead…

it can be a letter to yourself…

it can be a poem…

it can be a prayer to God, ending with “Amen”…

Be creative.

Be yourself.

The first 3 statements are from history. They were written by groups of people, and are used in churches around the world. The second 3 statements are from other youth. These are only to get the juices flowing, to get your mind set on the wide variety of ways people have talked about God and their Christian faith over the last many hundreds of years.

Youth Statement of Faith #1

To me, God is almighty. God has the ultimate power. It makes me feel good that he does because it means that everything that happens is because of God. I have my decisions in everyday life knowing that God is in control of them. Jesus is the redeemer to me. He was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty.

from there He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Youth Statement of Faith #2

When I am out on the sailboard in the middle of the beauty of the lake, I can feel the presence of God. I can feel his presence with me on the lake, and it makes me think about my own faith. In a way, I can easily make my faith and God, not sailing the boat. When I look out onto the glistening water, I think about how all this is made by God, and he gives us all we have.

I believe that there is only one God steering everything that happens. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Rome about the Holy Spirit, and I believe that God is with us always. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, who works in us and others. It is the Spirit of God that helps me in my faith.

God helps me to do the right thing in my life, and he helps me to feel his presence with me.

Youth Statement of Faith #3

We believe in God: the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Amen.

A New Creed, The United Church of Canada, 1980

We are not alone, we live in God’s world.

We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church to celebrate God’s presence, to live with respect in creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and right evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Youth Statement of Faith #4

God is a mysterious thing

What is it?

Do I really know?

I believe that Jesus is God in people form

And that the Holy Spirit is a spirit in us

Believe that God's friends go to church

But not all of God's friends go to church

I believe that you can pray anywhere

Anytime you want

I believe that if everyone prayed to our God, there'd be peace throughout our world

And that the future of our world will be an earthly paradise

But there's always someone to destroy it

And there will always be things that happen that make the church a great place

I believe that there is only one God creating everything

And that the bible is a big history book

The events in the bible tell us how to live

And that the bible will expand as we learn more

Yet to come

I believe that God is anything we imagine him to be

Church is many things

What is it?

I believe that church is a school

A school where we learn God's ways

A school where we learn God's values

A school where we can learn about God

A school where we can learn about the world

I believe that the people of the church are the church

They make the church a strong place

They make the church a caring place

They make the church a great place

They make the church the perfect place

I believe that the people are God's people

They are God's creation

God made the people to last for eternity

And always will...