

Statement of Faith

I believe in the Triune God – God the Creator, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The description of the Trinity that has best helped me understand and communicate this difficult theological concept is perichoresis. As Shirley Guthrie explains, God embodies community within God's self (*Christian Doctrine* 91). The three persons of the Trinity, Creator, Son, and Spirit are three dancers, holding hands, dancing in harmonious, joyful freedom. Because God embodies community within God's self, we know that people are created and called to be in community with one another.

I believe in God the Creator, who gives us life and unconditional love. God's grace is freely given to humanity and cannot be earned. However, we are called to respond to the gift of God's grace by showing God's love to the world. I believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God incarnate; he ate with sinners, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and calls his followers to do the same. Jesus was crucified for the sins of humanity, died, and rose again. Jesus is Lord and Savior. He broke the bonds of sin and death, and through his resurrection, we all have new life.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies us. The Holy Spirit is God within us, helping us to understand scripture, to be in relationship with one another, and to communicate with God.

I believe that the church is the body of Christ in the world. The church gathers together to worship God and to proclaim the good news of the gospel to a sinful and broken world. The church, at its best, challenges believers to respond out of gratitude to God's grace by being God's hands and feet in the world.

I believe in the sacraments, baptism and communion. Both of these sacraments are visible signs and seals of God's grace. In baptism, we receive new life in Christ and are marked as Christ's own, forever. In communion, we eat bread and drink wine to receive Christ's presence and to remember God's covenant of grace with us (*Book of Order* W-1.3033)

I believe that the Bible is God's Word, written. The Bible contains stories that tell us about our ancestors in the faith. I read scripture to better understand who I am, who God is, and how I am called to be in relationship with God and with other people. I believe it is important to interpret the Bible in light of the historical and cultural context in which it was written. I also believe it is important to read scripture in community, as it is in community that we gain new insights and hold each other accountable for our interpretations.

Autobiographical Statement

I am a mother, daughter, spouse, sister, and friend. I was born in Knoxville, TN and spent most of my childhood growing up in Oak Ridge, TN. I am an oldest daughter and I fit almost all of the “birth order” stereotypes that entails. I have one younger brother. My parents, brother, and sister-in-law, now all live in the Nashville area and I am grateful for the proximity to them.

Growing up, my family was very active at First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge. Though that congregation experienced its share of hardship and staff conflict over the years, it was the lay leadership, the Director of Christian Education, and the community I found in youth group and choir that kept me connected, grounded in God’s love, and growing in faith. As a junior in high school, I served as an elder on the Session of First Pres., Oak Ridge, and that was my first taste of serving the church in a leadership role. I went on to intern at First Pres. during several summers in high school and college, working with the Christian Education program.

I attended college at Vanderbilt University and studied psychology, French, and sociology. I was active in what was then called PSF at Vanderbilt and is now called UKirk Nashville. This campus ministry was my home away from home, my community, and a significant part of exploring and deepening my faith in college. My junior year of college, I began working at Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC) a few hours a week as the Children’s Ministry Assistant. Thus began my relationship with another formative faith community.

Because of my interest in clinical work, theology, and social justice, I decided to pursue a dual graduate degree— a Master of Divinity at Vanderbilt and a Master of Social Work at the University of Tennessee’s Nashville campus. A year into graduate school, when a full-time youth ministry position opened up at WPC, I decided to apply, and they hired me! During my time at WPC, I learned so much from that community – from children, youth, adults, and colleagues on staff. I was given the gift of exploring different areas of ministry – from youth work to disaster recovery to congregational care. I met my spouse, Andy, at WPC, and we were married there in 2014. Our daughter, Kate, was born in 2018 and she was baptized at Westminster. Andy and Kate are the biggest gifts in my life. Being a mom is both the hardest and the best thing I have ever done.

In 2019, I began to sense that God might be calling me away from WPC and to something new. I was a new mom and was eager for less pull on my nights and weekends. I was also feeling called to use my Master of Social Work in a more direct way, and possibly in a different, less privileged setting than WPC. In the spring of 2019, I left Westminster to accept a role as a social worker at Alive Hospice.

In my time at Alive, I did home hospice, so I was invited into people’s homes when they or a loved one was at the end of life. I experienced this to be holy ground. I sought to provide emotional support, grief support, and tangible assistance to families caring for loved ones at the end of life. While I loved this work, the demands on my time and the amount of documentation required meant that even though I was home in the evenings and not at

church meetings, I was still working almost every night. When a friend approached me about interviewing for a position at Nashville Collaborative Counseling Center (NCCC), I thought, "Why not?" I began working as a therapist for NCCC in July of 2021. In my role at NCCC, I work with clients who are experiencing anxiety, depression, perinatal mood disorders, grief, and religious trauma, among other issues. These clients are diverse and many of them come to NCCC seeking support around more than one issue in their lives. NCCC is not religiously affiliated; however, many of the clients I see have experienced some sort of religious trauma or toxic Christianity that has harmed them in some way. I have been listening and searching for ways to live out my call to ministry and to clinical work and this current ministry is where I'm called for this season.

In college, graduate school, and during my time at Westminster, I served the Presbytery on the Outreach Mission Unit and then the College and Young Adult Mission Unit. I look forward to becoming involved in the Presbytery as a minister of word and sacrament and to serving in new ways.