

REVEREND CHRIS PALMER

STATEMENT OF FAITH

There have been small moments of mystery that day-by-day continue to draw me back to faith. Christians call God Trinity because it names something of that mystery: God as simple and complex, in us yet beyond us, already and not yet, One and Three. Maybe more than anything, Trinity names the most basic thing about God: God is Love, and Love does not live alone. We name God as persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – because Love can only exist in freedom and relationship.

Love is always in the business of pouring itself out, and thus the world was created and declared good. Anything born of Love can rightfully be called good. To be a creature is to say that we are “from somewhere” and “for something” – that we have been created for a purpose and towards a goal. To say I am a creature is to say that there is something essential about me that is called good, because I have been created by and for Love.

Yet, there is something aloof about human beings. We are thrown into a world of competing desires, ambitions, and agendas. We say we are “fallen” because falling is the most natural course for an unrestrained object. It is easy to give ourselves into our worst instincts – to fear that there will not be enough for us. The ancient writers often called sin a “blasphemy,” not because it diminishes who God is but who we think She can be.

I believe that Christ’s risen body means that there is another, more truthful way to live. Jesus Christ offends the scarcity that we imagine for ourselves and our world. To say that we are “in Christ” means that we trust in the faithfulness of Christ to find us even when life leaves us exiled. To be “in Christ” means that we recognize that we have been chosen, yet also to realize that we are not the only center of God’s story. The kind of love that Christ embodied in the world does not come naturally, so we say that we have been saved, not by nature but by grace.

The Church is the symphony that sounds God’s strange and gracious story in our world. In the Scriptures, in Baptism, and at the Table we respond and enter again into that story. To be “in Christ” is to find ourselves, not just as a spectator but as a partaker of that story. To worship is to call God what Jesus called God: “our Father.” We call God “ours” because Love cannot live alone, and faith always requires community. I believe God gave us the most mundane symbols – water, bread, and wine – because even the most commonplace can testify to divine purposes. By giving us these ordinary things, God reminds us that every inch of our world – every dirty corner, every cast-aside person – is holy.