

Statement of Faith  
Patricia L. Schick

My faith is based on the Living, Creator God, and Jesus Christ, who through his death and resurrection has saved humans from death. Because of this resurrection of the body, humans can believe that we, too, will be resurrected into life everlasting as the Scriptures tell us (Matt 25:46; 1Tim 6:12,19; Rev 22:19). For me, resurrection takes other forms, too, as we humans encounter suffering and tragedy: *out of the ashes comes life*. I believe none of us need to remain in the grip of death-like existence (eg. addiction, grief, depression, anger/bitterness), but can be transformed into a new life of joy and fulfillment through God's grace.

I believe in the Holy Spirit which is God dwelling in me and I believe that through the Holy Spirit, God continues to work in and for the world. Throughout my adulthood I have studied the Scriptures, believing that the truth lies in them. I find God there as an active, present God who communicates with me. In particular, reading Hebrews 13:5 I have felt the incredible comfort from God's Word, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." One such time was when my 12-year old son died. In my grief, I depended on the Comfort from God's Spirit to sustain me through prayer and through the help and comfort of others. In the years that followed, the Holy Spirit used this painful time in my life to strengthen me and to understand and help others in their grief, giving me the inclination and the ability to be with the grieving and the suffering.

God's Spirit with me, life's learning experiences and a daily devotion time have given me opportunities to grow in Christian character. Galatians 5:22 has proved itself again and again in my life as I am aware of the Spirit giving me patience where I had none, joy and peace when I thought they could not exist, and faith when it seemed to be exhausted. The fruits of the Spirit have proven to be an amazing promise being fulfilled in my life. My own continuing transformation gives me hope, the expectation to see grace in others' lives, and the trust to believe that transformation will continue to occur in the Church.

From my childhood through adulthood I have grown to understand that Christ's Body, the Church, the community of believers, is essential to developing in the faith. Through the Holy Spirit all believers may have communion with Jesus Christ and with each other by participating in worship and in the Holy Sacraments. In the Lord's Supper, believers are held in wondrous communion with Christ as we partake of these signs – eating the bread and drinking the wine; and Christ becomes one with us and each one with another. In Baptism I have joined with Christ's Church and no matter what happens I know that I am a part of it, a child of God, and a citizen of the reign of God.

Through God's grace my understanding has continued to grow as to what obeying the command to *love your neighbor as yourself* involves. It is certainly having the philosophy and the sentiment toward loving others, but I believe more than ever it has to become a conversion, an empathy experienced toward the "other", foregoing my own comfort and ego. When this occurs, I feel God's closeness, and know that Christian love for another is the connection that God wants among humans. It is where God's heart lives.