

<p>GOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
<p>CHRIST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
<p>HOLY SPIRIT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
<p>A BEAUTIFUL WORLD</p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?)
<p>A TROUBLED WORLD</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
<p>A FAITHFUL RESPONSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)?
<p>A GATHERED CHURCH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?

Kenilworth Union Church

Confirmation 2018-2019

A Statement of Faith

"Faith is nothing more - but how much this is - than a motion of the soul toward God. It is not belief. Belief has objects - faith does not. Even the motion of faith is mysterious and inexplicable: I say the soul moves "toward" God, but that is only the limitation of language. It may be God who moves, the soul that opens.
 - from My Bright Abyss by Christian Wiman

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 have some personal parts...
- it can be a letter to God...
- 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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Apostles Creed, Rome, written at least 1,400 years ago</i></p> <p>I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the 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 arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence 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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Statement of Faith, United Church of Christ, 1959</i></p> <p>We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:</p> <p>You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.</p> <p>You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.</p> <p>In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.</p> <p>You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.</p> <p>You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.</p> <p>You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.</p> <p>Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A New Creed, The United Church of Canada, 1980</i></p> <p>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 resist 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.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Youth Statement of Faith #1</i></p> <p>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 base my decisions in everyday life on knowing that God is there overseeing them. Jesus is the redeemer to me. He died on the cross to save us from our sins. I try to make things better for other people just like Jesus would do. The Holy Spirit is ubiquitous; it completes the Holy Trinity and is god on earth. I know God isn't actually next to me but I know that the Holy Spirit is always by my side looking out for me. The church and its members are accepting. No matter who you are, you're considered family. Everyone at church accepts me for who I am. Church was the time of week when I was able to be with my family and my Grandparents; I will always remember eating lunch after church with my grandparents. God has given me a great life here on Earth and I will continue to have one, even through the afterlife. It brings joy to my heart when I think about all the things God has blessed me with; food, water, a roof, and a loving family. Being a Christian prides me in its entirety leaving me feeling warm inside. The Holy Trinity, the Church, and God's promises are what I try to live up to each day.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Youth Statement of Faith #2</i></p> <p>When I am out on the sailboat 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 boat, and it makes me think about my own faith. In a way, I can even relate my faith, and God, to sailing the boat. When I look out onto the gorgeous water, I think about how it was all created by God, and he gave us all that we have.</p> <p>In addition, God promises courage, forgiveness, and many other positive things. Since God made many promises for us, I promise to be open to God's advice, and what he is giving me. God gave me gifts, like being able to sail the boat, and having the persistence to learn. Because he gave me these gifts and other gifts, I would like to use them to benefit people, to be the best that I can be, and to honor God.</p> <p>I believe that God's gift to us was Jesus. And when I think of Jesus, I see him as a role model, and that I can follow his examples. This is why when I am faced with a tough decision I like to think about what he would do, and try to do the same.</p> <p>Sailing is not always a perfectly smooth and easy experience, but when I think of the hard times on the boat, I think that the Holy Spirit is with me. I can tell that the Spirit is with me, and when I am at a loss for what to do, the Spirit helps me to maneuver the boat, and helps me decide my actions. The Spirit helps me on the boat, but in addition, the Holy Spirit helps me during my life in general. The Spirit does many other things in my life, like guiding me towards my gifts and helping me to develop them further.</p> <p>To feel the strong hull of the boat beneath me is reassuring, just like the feeling of being in my church and the support that my church gives me. In my church, I know that there are people I can trust, who will support me in my times of need. They help me to form decisions that are wise and beneficial to many. My church also gives me opportunities to help other people in their times of need. And my church friends also give me new ideas to help my faith grow. The growth of my faith at this church has been a very interesting journey with many obstacles to overcome, but also many enjoyable and interesting parts, just like the journey of a ride on my sailboat.</p> <p>The trinity and my church have had a great impact on my life so far, and will continue to affect me and help my faith grow. On my faith journey, I have learned many things about God, but there is one that sticks out most of all. God can't promise smooth sailing, but he can promise to be with me and help me get through tough times and he can "weather the storm" with me on our journey.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Youth Statement of Faith #3</i></p> <p>God is a mysterious thing What is it? Do I really know? I believe that Jesus is God in people form And I believe that Holy Spirit is the God in a spirit form I 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 too I believe that if everyone prayed to our God, there'd be peace throughout earth And that he reigns over our world Forever and ever But there's always someone to destroy it And there always will be I believe that there is only one God steering everything I believe that the bible is a big history book Containing the events in which God helped people the most And that the bible will be expanded For more great occurrences Yet to come I believe that God is anything we imagine him to be</p> <p>Church is many things What is it? I believe that church is a school A school where I can learn more about God A school where I can learn from my mistakes A school where I can keep learning throughout my life 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 The people make the church. I believe that the people are God's people They are God's creation God leads the people to their destination And always will...</p>