



# Statement of Faith

As we find ourselves carried within mainstream Christian theology and practice across time and space, we believe that Bloom – as the local church Denver, Colorado – is uniquely positioned to play our small part in proclaiming the love and truth of God through beauty, sacrament, and restoration to a particular people, in a particular culture, at a particular time in the grand history of the Church.

## **A SACRAMENTAL, CHARISMATIC COMMUNITY**

Primarily, Bloom is situated within the historical and global Church.

At Bloom, our beliefs serve as the foundation and charter for the shape and life of our community.

Therefore, we offer them not as idle theological speculations or binding commitments, but rather as a clue into the source and shape of our life together as God ever brings about his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

The Church's ancient creeds join across the centuries of faith and tradition in the Church to create a narrative in which we prayerfully confess, submit ourselves to, and hope we will be formed by in ways that carry us into the Kingdom of God evermore. The creeds serve as the bounds of our faith, which includes some explicit insight into who the One, Triune God is and who we are as his beloved image bearers. However, within those bounds the creed also offers infinite holy mystery, which we must seek to surrender to while also continuing to seek communal wisdom and guidance as his reality among us becomes more and more crystalized as we live our life together. Therefore, the following statement takes its cue from the historic creeds, namely the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

However, we also take into consideration that the journey of the Church over the last 2,000 years into the present is ever continuing and is not yet complete. Thus, the Holy Spirit continues to give the Church deeper convictions into the mystery of life in the One, Triune God. With this in consideration, we therefore use the creeds as a guide to our beliefs and have further explained in ways we feel important to our unique story as the people of Bloom, our charismatic nature, and our contextual presence.



## 1. WE BELIEVE IN THE TRIUNE GOD: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

Eternal, preexistent, and self-sufficient; He is pure, undiminished light and holiness, and in Him there is no trace of evil.

This God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each distinct but fully united.

This God created the world and everything in it and called it “good”.

This God called and continually calls for himself a people in order to bless the world and bring his goodness to bear in it.

This God keeps the promises he makes, always.

This God speaks:

*Generally* (in creation)

*Prophetically* (through Israel’s Prophets)

*Truly* (in the Scriptures)

*Definitively* (in Jesus)

This God does not fail to accomplish his purposes, but is both powerful enough to do what he has promised without being thwarted by human beings and wise enough to do it in ways that preserve the integrity of human freedom.



## 1A // This God is Creator and he loves his creation

Since the earliest days of Christianity, the Church has had to work hard to clarify who she is and what she believes from unorthodox theological ideas, many of which despised or demeaned the created order. From ancient Gnosticism to certain forms of modern fundamentalism (in which the goal of faith is an escape from the world), there is a persistent tendency among Christians to devalue life on planet earth. The Creed, however, along with the Scriptures declare that the created order is *good* (Gen 1), and made by the hand of a loving Creator who fully intends to restore and amplify its beauty. In perhaps the greatest glimpse of this reality so far has been the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus.

This conviction ramifies in our context primarily in that:

- the earth itself matters, as does our care of her;
- the “worldliness” of our life matters;
- and our being “enfleshed creatures” (made of the dirt of the earth and the breath of God) is the theater of God’s glory.

## 1B // God is a Community of Persons and that matters for all of life

In addition to the demeaning of the created order, Christianity has also had to work hard to ward off theologies that collapsed God into a pure *singularity* at the expense of his *plurality*. The doctrine of the Trinity was a scandal to many in the ancient world (Jewish and pagan) and it still is today. The temptation is always to forsake one member of the Trinity for a spirituality that focuses on a different member; and yet you cannot have the Father without the Son, or the Son without the Spirit, or the Spirit without the Father. The Creed insists along with the Scriptures that God is “one being” in “three persons”. This Triune God is an eternally self-sufficient community of self-giving love.

Among the myriad of ways in which this doctrine is ramified, our conviction is that a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity awakes us to the beauty of God himself, but further makes possible a deep understanding of love and community on the human level. Our “oneness” in Christ never threatens our



differences (in fact, it makes them all the more brilliant and beautiful) and thus our differences need not be a hindrance to our “oneness”.

**1C // The First Member of the Godhead is called both “Father” and “Almighty”, which is a way of saying that God’s power and his love are perfectly united**

God is both the Sovereign and Lord of the universe AND a *Father* who loves us unconditionally, completely, and is unremitting in his commitment to our good. That means that God is both powerful enough to accomplish his purposes but also “father enough” to do it in ways that respect the integrity of the human will. His power and his love are never at war with each other but are perfectly united in God.



## 2. WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD

Jesus Christ was the Messiah promised by God in the Old Testament Scriptures. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and born under the shadow of the Roman Empire.

Jesus was paradoxically fully God and fully man, through and through, in every way.

*God from God*

*Light from Light*

*True God from True God*

*Begotten not made*

*Of one being with the Father*

*Through him all things were made*

He suffered for our sin under Pontius Pilate – was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead and rose again on the third day, triumphant over sin, death, and hell.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand in glory.

One day, he will come again to restore all things and to judge the living and the dead.

This Jesus truly and personally meets us now:

*Individually*

*In the fellowship of the saints*

*In the breaking of the bread and the giving of wine at Communion*



**2A // Jesus is rightly called “Lord” because he is truly “God from God”, so that in him we MEET and SEE God**

We have often said that when God speaks, “Jesus” is what he says. In Jesus we are encountering the fullness of what the God of Israel has always been saying about Himself from the beginning. In one passage, one of Jesus’ disciples explodes, “Lord, just show us the Father and that will be enough!” Jesus’ response is so telling: “Have I been with you so long and you don’t know me? *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*” (John 14)

Jesus was a human Son, and we have been made like him and are increasingly being made evermore into his image. This sort of insight is the kind of thing that keeps spirituality and worship anchored in the concrete, instead of some escape to spiritual ascent. God is not some vague being whom we can generally understand. In Jesus, God gets *specific*, and we believe that in all the angularities and peculiarities of the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth God is truly seen and known, the Lord of all.

**2B // All things were made THROUGH Jesus and FOR Jesus, and therefore he is worthy of reverence and worship... he is the CENTER of all things and that orients the life of our community in EVERY way**

The language of the Creed at this point mirrors the language and thought of the Apostle Paul beautifully; that “all things” were created *through* Jesus and *for* Jesus. Everything is careening towards a meeting with the Incarnate God, Jesus the Lord, and the fullness of life is to be found in glad submission to him.



As with 2A above, this is the kind of insight that guides and shapes the spirituality of a community by anchoring it in adoration and submission and prevents it from dissolving into mere activism or moral instruction.

**2C // Jesus, in addition to being “God from God”, is also “truly human”, so that in him we see what God intend(ed/s) for all humanity**

Genesis declares that mankind was created “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1). The rest of the Scriptures go on to recount the sordid history of how humanity, through its own continued acts of rebellion, have continuously marred, defaced, and fractured that “image” in ourselves and in one another. Yet Jesus, declares Paul, is the “image of the invisible God”—both a perfect picture of God and also a perfect picture of what we as human beings were and are supposed to be. In fact, the New Testament’s resounding claim is that the Spirit’s work in us is to conform us to the “image” of Christ, progressively restoring what was broken in us.

That is to say, Jesus’ call to “follow me” is still an offer to humanity (by his Spirit) to become like him. As we respond to the call and follow him, we walk further and further into all we were meant to be.



### 3. WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE, WHO PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER, WHO WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON IS WORSHIPPED AND GLORIFIED, WHO HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE PROPHETS

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son, so that in him we truly meet God.

He is the very breath, life, and power of God. God's promised gift given to us by Jesus and sent to liberate creation and set humanity freed.

He was poured out at Pentecost –

*Uniting* all who believe in One Body, the Church

*Equipping* the saints for service

*Convicting* the world of sin

*Glorifying* God's Son

*Serving* as our Advocate

*Guiding* us into all truth

*Teaching* us to live faithfully, missionally, and "Christomorphically"

*Filling* us with the Godhead

And *guaranteeing* our destiny in God

The Holy Spirit animates all creation but uniquely indwells, purifies, and unites to Jesus those who truly confess him as Lord.





### 3A // The Holy Spirit's work is comprehensive and indispensable

The Scriptures actually have a lot to say about the Spirit's role in the world and in the life of the community of faith. We have chosen, here, to draw attention to a few things the Creed declares and a couple it doesn't:

*The Holy Spirit is also called the Lord* which means in part that he leads and rules over the Church. Jesus guides us now through his Spirit. We submit to and trust his leading.

*The Holy Spirit is worthy of adoration and worship* (co-equal with the Father and the Son). The Holy Spirit is no second class citizen in the Godhead. Rather, he deserves all the honor and glory proper to the Godhead.

*The Holy Spirit is called the "life-giver"* which means that he animates and enlivens all of Creation but uniquely indwells and makes alive those who trust in Jesus. To orient our life together towards the Holy Spirit is to open ourselves to Life indestructible and fathomless.

*The Holy Spirit has spoken and still speaks.* The prophets and writers of Scripture, the Church believes, were "inspired" by the Holy Spirit, who continues to speak now to the people of God, drawing them deeper into the mystery of all that God is.

*The Holy Spirit unites believers to Christ and fills them with the Godhead.* It is through the Spirit of God that we are grafted into the life of the Triune God and "filled (continually) with all the fullness" of God.

*The Holy Spirit distributes gifts and manifests himself in each member of the Body,* which is for the good and upholding of the Body of Christ.



The list could go on and on. The reality is that outside of a few sectors of the U.S. church, the work of the Holy Spirit is not sufficiently stated, appreciated, or experienced. But we believe in the charismatic nature of the Church—by which we mean the Holy Spirit is alive and moves in, among, and through the Church and her people so that the world may taste and see that this God is true and that He is good. We believe that nothing—nothing—of what God wants to accomplish in and through his people is possible apart from the work of the Spirit. So we declare with the Creed that “with the Father and the Son” he is “worshiped and glorified”.

### **3A // The Kingdom of God is made known on earth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit**

Just as the Kingdom of God is God’s future reign on the earth as seen in the life and ministry of Jesus, it is God’s future reign breaking into the present through the ministry of the Body of Christ: The Church filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit distributes the same gift among the church today as is seen in the experience of the early Church (Romans 12:6–8, 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 1 Corinthians 12:28), enabling us to experience the presence and love and grace of God both personally and corporately, and to bring the healing (physical, spiritual, and emotional), justice, love, and grace of God to all places to which we are sent in the power of the Spirit.



## 4. WE BELIEVE IN THE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOSTOLIC CHURCH AND THE VISIBLE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

The culmination of the work of the Triune God is the forming of a people to carry forward his purposes, and the Creed actually calls us to declare that “we believe” in that people—the Church. It is easy to lose confidence in the Church, as she is so often confused, foolish, ignorant, hurtful, and wayward. So we have to confess our belief that God has chosen to have a people, and somehow, miraculously, has chosen to extend his work into the world through that people.

The Church is “one” because she is the sole possession of Jesus—his very Body, indivisible, his singular Bride.

She is “holy” because through the sacrifice of Jesus, God the Holy Spirit has made and is making her into the likeness of the Godhead, who is holy.

She is “catholic” (universal) because God has not intended to confiner her to one place and because in her every tribe, tongue, people, and race will one day be present according to the Scriptures

**4A // The Scriptures are historical, alive, formative, and true.**



She is “apostolic” because she is “built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles” and is herself the continuation of their work. That foundation and its continuation is found to be evident and true in the living Scriptures.

And she is a “visible communion” because God has called us to truly share our lives together in visible, local fellowship

*Serving* as a “new humanity” (Ephesians 2, Colossians 3) and a “colony of heaven” (Philippians 3:20)

*Acting* as a sign and a foretaste of the kingdom of God until Christ returns.

The Church’s members serve God, the world, and one another through the wisdom of the Scriptures and with the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given each one of them; so that they may lead “cruciform” (cross-shaped) lives of witness as they point to, enact, and await the renewal of all things in Christ.

#### **4B // We believe in the forgiveness of sins.**

We believe that sin entered the world through one man, Adam.

And death entered the world through sin.

And therefore death came to all men, because all have sinned. (Romans 5)

We believe that sin is both an act that creates guilt and a condition that creates slavery.

Through Jesus’ loving life and sacrifice on the cross:

The ransom has been paid.

Sin has been unmasked, disarmed, and rendered powerless.

And therefore those that trust in Jesus are not merely forgiven, but liberated.

Christ is both our substitute and our victor, according to the Scriptures.

Therefore, as the Church we celebrate his forgiveness and walk in his victory.



## 5. WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

We believe that Christ was made flesh as an affirmation of God's declaration that the material world is "good" and that his bodily resurrection is a sign and a seal that one day he will return, that the dead will be raised, and that the redeemed will dwell with him forever in a new heavens and a new earth.

**5A // The "blessed hope" is resurrection (not escape) and "the life of the WORLD" to come... that blessed hope is breaking into the present and it matters for all of life**

If all of the above is true, then God's aim is nothing less than to restore us right along with the rest of creation—spirit, soul, and body (Romans 8). Though we live in a time of "groaning" along with the creation, we still taste and see glimmers of resurrection and "new creation" breaking in now (2 Cor 5:17). The people of God in this present reality are to serve as an instrument, sign, and foretaste of that which is to come—the Resurrection of the Dead, the New Creation, the Kingdom of God—which is another way of saying that our lives and our life together matter and attest to the coming Kingdom.



## **I N   C L O S I N G**

We believe this statement as our best understanding of what the Bible teaches and Church history illuminates in the fundamental matters of faith in order to define the theological “world” we live and seek to flourish within. In matters not clearly defined or articulated here, we believe that the One, Triune God is ever before us and revealing his truth, mercy, and grace in all and through all. Therefore, in these matters we seek to cultivate communal clarity, lively discussion, and discernment for the sake of edification, always keeping the bounds of the historical Church and the work of the Holy Spirit as our guides.