

In the beginning, God created. Out of nothing, through the power of voice, God spoke into being all that we see and more that we cannot. God formed us: dust from dust, rib from rib. God breathed and we lived. And God declared it good. In time, though, we fell away. We forgot and we turned our backs on God and on one another. But God did not forget. God called and promised and loved us. God liberated us and led us through the Red Sea. God provided for us in the wilderness and made a covenant with us in the desert. God came down and God dwelled with us. Time and time again, we forget and turn away. Yet God remains faithful and continues still to call us back.

Out of the depths of love, God sent God's only son to live among us: God of God, light of light, fully human and the fullness of humanity, fully divine and forever redefining divinity. Healing the sick, taking notice of the forgotten, teaching new understandings, Jesus transformed the way we understand what it means to be human and what it means to know God. And, out of the breadth of his love, Jesus endured death on the cross. Refusing to cater to the powers and principalities of his time, Jesus sacrificed himself for us – justifying our relationship with our Creator, bridging the gaps and tearing down the walls between us and God. The only one who was in a position to judge us redeemed us. Having died, God raised him, opening us all to the possibility of new life with God.

From the beginning, God has been present in our midst and beyond our boundaries. Blowing freely, the Spirit challenges and guides us. Rousing faith within us, God the Spirit connects us to God the Creator and God the Christ, allowing us to be in relationship with the Triune God. Through the waters of Baptism, the Spirit claims us as beloved children of God. At the table, the Spirit feeds and sustains us, re-presenting Christ in our midst. Convicting us of the Scriptures, the Spirit pushes us to justice and liberation. Urging each of us individually, and all of us collectively, the Spirit calls us to be who God created us to be: free and beloved children of God. The Spirit binds us to one another and to God, in and through the Church. But the Spirit also pushes our edges. Refusing to be captive to the Church, the Spirit flows where it will, inspiring faith in many ways and in many places.

As beloved children of God, we are called: to pursue God with faithfulness and devotion, to partner with the Spirit in the work of justice and liberation, to bring God's kingdom to fruition here on earth. We are called to live as Christ in community with all people. We are called to be the Church, followers of our Lord and Savior, in every place and in every time, remembering that God has promised to be with us always, to the end of the age.