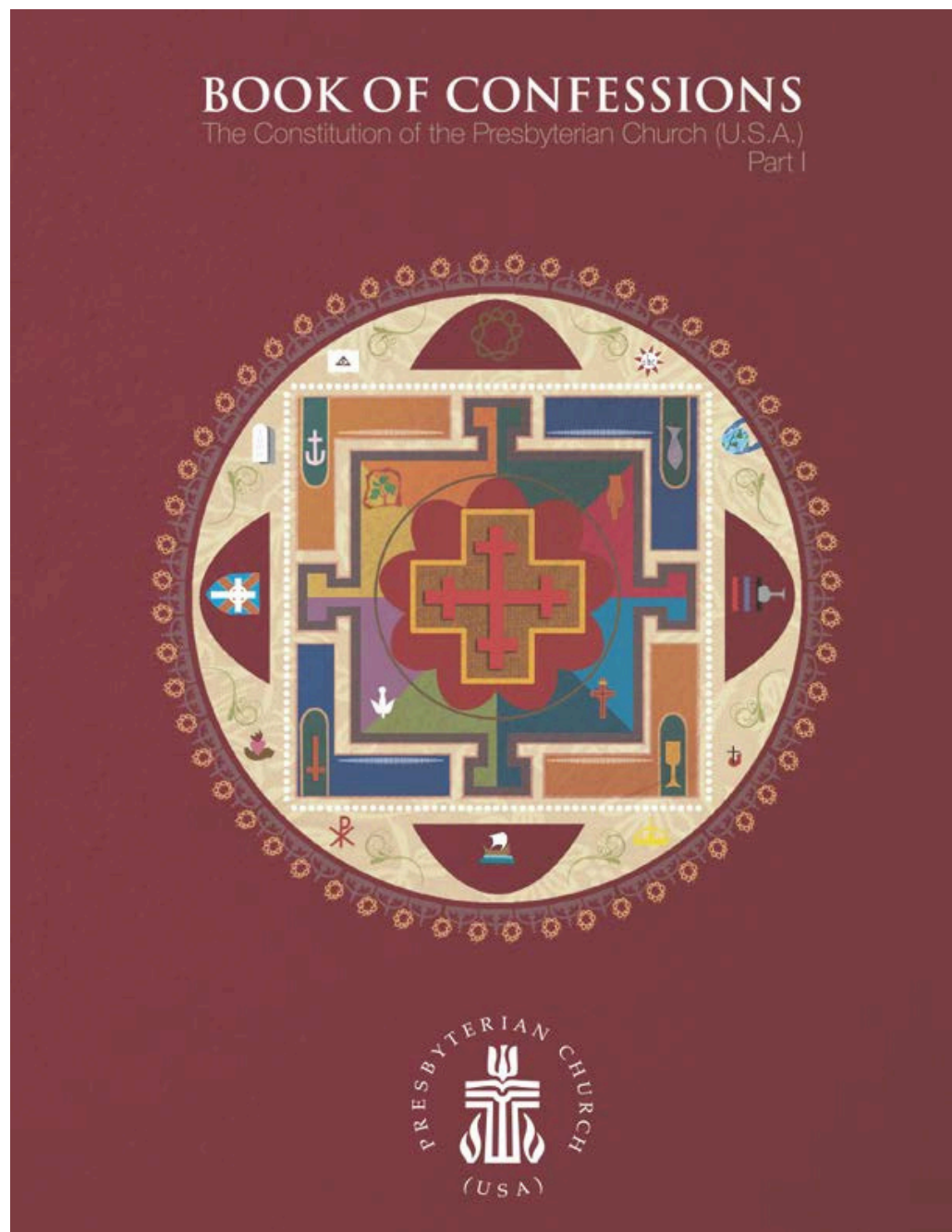




**WHAT
PRESBYTERIANS
BELIEVE**

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH



Written in 1983 for the reunification of the two largest Presbyterian denominations in the United States:
the **Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS)**
located primarily in the south
and
the **United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA)** located primarily in the north.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

FIVE SECTIONS

1

Introduction - To Whom We Belong, In Whom We Trust

2

What We Believe About God the Son

3

What We Believe About God the Father

4

What We Believe About God the Holy Spirit

5

Doxological Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

**In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

Questions:

- *What does this introduction say about the nature of God?*
- *How does it shape our understanding of ourselves individually and as a community?*

SECTION 2 - GOD THE SON

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
Fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent
and believe the gospel.**

Questions:

- *What does it mean for Jesus to be fully human, fully God?*
- *How does his dual nature shape our understanding of his ministry and role in salvation?*
- *What was his central message and how does it challenge or inspire us to live differently today?*
- *What does the way Jesus embodied that message teach us about how we should relate to people who are marginalized or hurting in our society?*

SECTION 2 - GOD THE SON

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

Questions:

- *How does his unjust suffering challenge our understanding of justice and the role of suffering in God's redemptive plan?*
- *What are the implications of Jesus "giving his life for the sins of the world?"*
- *What comfort and hope does Jesus suffering on the cross, described as "suffering the depths of human pain," bring us in times of difficulty?*
- *What is the significance of God raising Jesus from the dead?*
- *How does the resurrection transform our understanding of sin, evil, and eternal life?*

SECTION 3 - GOD THE FATHER

**We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba,
Father.**

**In sovereign love
God created the world good
and makes everyone equally
in God's image
male and female,
of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God;
we hide from our Creator.**

Questions:

- *How does Jesus calling God “Abba, Father” shape our understanding of God’s relationship with us and the intimacy we are invited to experience with God?*
- *What are the implications of the statement that “God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God’s image”?*
- *How does this shape our understanding of human dignity and the value of all people?*
- *What does it mean that “we rebel against God” and “hide from our Creator”?*
- *How does this acknowledgment shape our understanding of the need for redemption and God’s grace in our lives?*

SECTION 3 - GOD THE FATHER

**Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God
in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to
the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.**

Questions:

- *What does it mean to “violate the image of God in others and ourselves”? How can recognizing the image of God in every person challenge the ways we treat others and ourselves?*
- *How do accepting “lies as truth” and exploiting “neighbor and nature” reflect a deeper disconnection from God's desires? How might we address these behaviors as a community of faith?*
- *What responsibility do we have as stewards of creation and how does threatening the planet's well-being reveal our failure to honor that responsibility? How can we align our actions with the care and preservation of the world entrusted to us?*

SECTION 3 - GOD THE FATHER

**Yet God acts with justice and mercy
to redeem creation.**

**In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah
chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.**

**Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.**

**Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.**

**Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.**

Questions:

- *What does it mean that God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation and how does this shape our understanding of God's character?*
- *How does the imagery of God as both father and mother deepen our understanding of God's covenantal love and faithfulness? How do these metaphors speak to the ways God responds to us in times of need?*
- *How does God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah connect to our role as "heirs with Christ"? And how does this inspire us to live?*

SECTION 4 - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

Questions:

- *What does it mean to trust in the Holy Spirit as "the giver and renewer of life," and how have you experienced this renewal in your own life or in the life of the Church?*
- *How does the Holy Spirit's work of justification by grace through faith set us free to accept ourselves and love God and neighbor? In what ways might we resist or embrace this freedom in our daily lives?*
- *What does it mean to be "bound together with all believers in the one body of Christ"? How can this unity inspire us to deepen our relationships within the church and across diverse communities of faith?*

SECTION 4 - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.

Questions:

- *How can we remain open to the Spirit's guidance as we engage with Scripture in our personal and communal lives?*
- *What does it mean for the Spirit to claim us in baptism, feed us in communion, and engage us through the Word proclaimed? How do these practices shape our identity and strengthen our relationship with God and one another?*
- *As this statement affirms the equal participation of women and men in God's work, what steps can we take to ensure that all voices and gifts are recognized and celebrated in our congregations and communities?*

SECTION 4 - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

Questions:

- *Where do you see that the world is broken and fearful?*
- *How have you witnessed the courage given by the Spirit displayed in our your congregation and community to address this brokenness and fearfulness?*
- *How are we called to embody this courage? What idolatries of church and culture need to be unmasked? How have we or how might we amplify marginalized voices?*
- *Which part of this call to action is easiest for you and which is the hardest?*

SECTION 4 - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions:

- *What role should gratitude play in our daily lives?*
- *How or when have you felt empowered by the Spirit?*
- *What does it mean to strive to live a holy and joyful life?*
- *How does the promise of God's new heaven and new earth shape our lives and give us hope?*
- *In what ways does praying "Come, Lord Jesus!" encourage us to live faithfully in the present?*

CONCLUSION

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Questions:

- *How does the assurance that “nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” shape the way we approach difficulties, loss, or uncertainty in life?*
- *How does the connection with believers in every time and place deepen our understanding of the universal and eternal nature of God’s love?*
- *In what ways does this shared faith strengthen our sense of belonging to the body of Christ?*