

Exhibit A-4

Statement of Faith

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I believe in the Triune God. God created our world and called it good. God created the beauty of the universe. We see the wonder of God in the minute details of a living cell and in the large expanses of the universe. God our creator has a sense of humor—God created the giraffe, the mosquito, the humpback whale, and the paramecium and called them all good. Our Creating God made human beings—male and female in God's own image. God calls us to live in covenant relationship with each other and with God. We were given the gift of the earth and called to be faithful stewards of all the earth contains.

But we rebelled against God, disobeyed his will, and broke the covenants made with us. God sent prophets to tell of God's will and desire, but we still did not listen and return to our LORD. So, the LORD sent the only Son to live among us. The Son, Jesus of Nazareth is fully divine and fully human. He knows the struggles of humanity; he understands our temptations; he shares our joy and our hurt. But humanity turned against Jesus as well. His closest companions deserted him, and he was beaten, tortured, and murdered on a Roman cross. We deserve God's wrath, yet God raised Jesus from the dead and offers all who repent resurrection through him. We are offered a place at his table, a place in his eternal kingdom.

Jesus returned to God the creator but did not leave us alone. The Holy Spirit came and lives among us giving us comfort in times of hurt, courage in the face of difficult challenges and strength to carry on God's will. As one of my confirmands once said, the "Holy Spirit is like sunscreen, there to protect you from the burning rays of life." We can feel the Holy Spirit with us during personal prayer, vibrant worship or simply as we walk in the woods or listen to God's voice in the waves breaking at the ocean shore. The Spirit rejoices with us as an infant is baptized and mourns with us as we stand by the bedside of a dying loved one. The Spirit sustains our life.

The Triune God has given the church two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments are visible signs of invisible gifts of grace. In Baptism, we are brought into the church, the body of Christ. We are claimed as God's own; we participate in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. All those baptized are welcome at the Lord's Table. In the sacrament of Holy Communion, we are nourished and fed with saints of all times and places. Jesus is present in the sacrament. Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension are remembered and honored. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember that Christ quenches our deepest thirsts and satisfies our deepest hungers.

The Triune God has a mission—the mission of God is the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ includes faithful followers of Christ of every race, nation, and culture. Men and women, young and old are all called to the work of ministry. We are called to share the good news of the gospel to all who long and need to hear it. We are called to a life of

service, where the needs of God's littlest ones—the poor, the orphaned, the hungry, the oppressed—are met. We are called to love the unlovable, pray for our enemies, and care for those who reject us. We are called to be good stewards of all the gifts of our Triune God.

Praise and honor be given to our Triune God, now and forever.