



January 26, 2020

Dear Member of Park Street Church,

On January 11, 2020, the Senior Minister Search Committee voted unanimously to recommend Rev. Mark L. Booker to the Board of Elders to be the sixteenth Senior Minister of Park Street Church. On January 22, 2020, the Board of Elders unanimously voted to approve this recommendation and present Rev. Booker to the Leadership Council and membership of our congregation for consideration.

We believe that Rev. Booker fulfills the qualifications set forth by the congregation. He is a substantive expository preacher, a humble visionary leader, a prophetic cultural ambassador and a practical theological trainer. And, he is a loving and dedicated shepherd of his flock.

This document includes information about the search process and the candidate. Members of the Board of Elders and the Senior Minister Search Committee are available to answer questions. They can be reached by email at elders-psc@parkstreet.org and search@parkstreet.org.

We ask you to be spiritually vigilant and to dedicate this week in concerted prayer. Recognizing that Scripture tells us that the people of God fasted in times of need and discernment, the Board of Elders invite you to join us in praising and thanking God, confessing our need for Him, and asking that He would clearly reveal His will.

In preparation for next Sunday's worship service and vote, there will be a worship and prayer night this coming Friday, January 31, 2020, at 7:00 PM, in the Welcome Center. There will be no childcare available on Friday evening, but everyone is welcome to attend this event. Please join us as we seek the Lord together!

Sincerely,

The Senior Minister Search Committee

David W. Rix, *Moderator*

Jason Abraham, *Elder*

James D. Bruce

Linda Herman, *Elder*

Richard Ibekwe

Leslie Liu

Margaret Sloat, *Elder*

THE PROCESS

In June 2016, Dr. Gordon Hugenberger, the fifteenth Senior Minister of Park Street Church, announced his retirement after serving our church for nearly twenty years. Upon this announcement, the church elected eleven individuals to serve on what was called the Senior Minister Search Committee (SMSC), which commenced its responsibility in October 2016. As part of their work, the SMSC put together a church profile by speaking with virtually all ministries within the church. They also generated questions to rank preaching ability and questions that queried the applicant's spiritual life, management skills and personal life.

The SMSC labored long and hard in their deliberations. In September 2018, the church engaged a consultant from the Slingshot Group, Richard Kidd, to help facilitate their deliberations. Despite their best efforts, the SMSC was unable to agree on a candidate. In May 2019, the Board of Elders voted to discharge the SMSC of their responsibility, and to reconstitute a new SMSC, which was elected in June 2019.

The new SMSC (committee) had the benefit of the church profile as well as access to all the questions the previous search committee compiled and the names of the applicants previously considered.

During its first meeting, the committee agreed that, above all else, prayer would be the only way in which the committee could come to an agreement on a candidate. The committee asked the congregation to pray for all aspects of the church and for the committee. With prayer first and foremost in the thinking of the committee, other operational procedures and values followed:

- Transparency and confidentiality were deemed extremely important.
- Each member of the senior ministerial staff and the interim senior minister were interviewed by the committee.

The Board of Elders agreed to continue the relationship with Richard Kidd. On his advice, the committee agreed that all new applications should be sent directly to him.

- Richard Kidd contacted each applicant and screened their application.
- The names of 21 applicants were forwarded to the committee for review, some of whom had been reviewed by the earlier committee.
- The three senior members of the current ministerial staff were informed that if they had an interest in the position, they should send their application to Richard Kidd.
 - No members of the current ministerial staff applied for the position.
- The committee added additional questions to the Slingshot portfolio.

Of the 21 applicants, some of these individuals withdrew their names very early in the process citing reasons including conflict with some of our church's policies or timing issues. While applications primarily came from individuals in the United States, one application came from England and one from Ghana. There were also applications from two Asian Americans, an African American and a Brazilian now in Europe. Applications came from individuals from the PCA, RCA, EPC, CCCC, Methodist and Anglican denominations.

The first step in the applicant review process was sermon evaluation. The committee developed criteria for evaluating sermons on content; delivery and style; and application. A committee member was assigned to review as many of an applicant's sermons as possible and to recommend three sermons, including ones with Old Testament and New Testament texts, for the whole committee to review using the evaluation form referenced earlier. Through the late summer and fall, the committee listened to sermons from 16 different individuals, evaluating each sermon. The result, based on the criteria, was a score of green, yellow or red for each sermon. Each applicant's three sermons were then averaged by each member to green, yellow or red. Four applicants emerged as having the strongest preaching skills. The committee began to schedule interviews and visits to their respective churches to hear them preach and to try to discern the relationship between the

applicant and his congregation. During this process, two of the four applicants withdrew their applications for various reasons.

The two remaining applicants met with the committee three times each as part of the process we followed to explore their qualifications, beliefs and leadership. After prayer and discernment, the committee voted unanimously to proceed with only one of the two final applicants. For the final applicant, additional information was gathered and the committee committed themselves to a time of prayer.

THE SENIOR MINISTER CANDIDATE

On Saturday, January 11, 2020 the committee voted unanimously to recommend Rev. Mark L. Booker to the Board of Elders to be the sixteenth Senior Minister of Park Street Church.

We believe that Rev. Booker fulfills the qualifications set forth by the congregation. He is a substantive expository preacher, a humble visionary leader, a prophetic cultural ambassador, and a practical theological trainer. And, he is a loving and dedicated shepherd of his flock.

Above all other reasons, the committee recommends Rev. Booker because of his godliness. He is a man who loves the Lord, seeks Him, and obeys Him, no matter the cost. There is no better example of Rev. Booker's character than the story of how he came to be recommended by the committee in the first place. His journey from hearing of Dr. Hugenberger's retirement to actually applying for the position was one of prayer, discernment and a deep conviction to listen to the Holy Spirit. Despite being deeply loyal and committed to his current congregation and feeling that there were too many obstacles to overcome for a successful application to Park Street Church, Rev. Booker applied out of obedience to God in late August of 2019. The humility and honesty with which Rev. Booker approached this application is the first thing that made the committee take note. After becoming our final candidate, he shared more than a dozen examples of ways that the Holy Spirit prepared him and prompted him, both to apply and ultimately, to be called to lead Park Street Church. His story resonated with the committee because each member of the committee had their own prompting from the Holy Spirit that Rev. Booker was God's choice for Park Street Church.

In Rev. Booker we see a man after God's own heart. His life is defined by a deep longing for God. He is a man of integrity, sincerity, humility, authenticity and passion. He is someone who listens carefully to and follows the leading of the Holy Spirit, prioritizes prayer and has a desire to awaken the hearts of others and to call them to a radical life with Jesus.

In coming to Park Street Church, Rev. Booker would see his primary role as "loving the people." Upon first meeting him and as we got to know him, we found him to be warm, personable and universally likeable. He is a true shepherd of his congregation whom he seeks to nurture with God's word and genuine love. He is committed to creating a strong community which embodies the love of Christ as evidenced by his work at his current church.

To the committee, Rev. Booker stood out as a strong, substantive preacher, one who can preach both exegetically and topically. He communicates truth in a clear, organized way reflecting an evangelical and Reformed approach. He is faithful to an orthodox interpretation of Scripture while able to lovingly relate to seekers as well as graciously engage contemporary controversial topics. He presents the application of Scripture in a way that is pragmatic, authentic, full of grace and humility, yet challenging and moving. The wisdom that he conveys from the pulpit is timeless and reaches across generations.

Rev. Booker is a natural leader, one with presence and quiet authority. His strength in communication and relational skills enable him to share his vision, which is based upon his learning and understanding the church and its people. He is thoughtful and intentional about the future; he values our tradition and will not try to change a lot of things right away but wants to spend time building trust and understanding in our church. He is not only a

vision caster but also has executive skills. At his current church, he developed strategies and implemented programs to mentor and train lay leaders and involve newcomers in the life of the church.

Rev. Booker's ministry experience has been shaped by a heart and vision for Boston as well as for missions. He yearns to see the Church flourish in the City of Boston for the sake of the greater Kingdom of God. He is not afraid to engage with society on tough topics such as racial reconciliation, sexuality and issues of justice, but he always seeks to do so in a winsome and compassionate manner.

Our Global Missions Program was a key part of Rev. Booker's initial attraction to Park Street Church. His heart for missions was exhibited early on when he spent six weeks as a college student preaching in Lesotho. Inspired by Park Street's record of missions giving, Rev. Booker has held that up as a model for his own church. He has also expressed eagerness to visit our missionaries.

It is for these reasons that the committee is excited to recommend Rev. Mark Booker as the candidate for the position of Senior Minister of Park Street Church.

BACKGROUND

Rev. Booker and his wife, Mandy, see their ministry as a mutual calling. They have four children, ages 16, 13, 11 and 9. He and his family avidly enjoy the outdoors and regularly bike, camp, hike and go rafting/kayaking.

His education includes a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Economics from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and both a Master of Arts, Theology (First Class) and a Master of Studies, Theology (Distinction), from the University of Oxford (Queen's College) in the United Kingdom. He was accepted twice into a doctoral program at the University of Oxford but deferred for family, medical, and ministry reasons.

Rev. Booker has served as a pastor for fifteen years and is currently Rector of the Church of the Cross, an Anglican church in the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood of Boston. He planted this church in 2009.

- He has been its Senior Minister since inception and, in that role, has been exposed to the full range of opportunities, pressures and challenges of serving as the Senior Minister of a church.
- Many early church members had limited biblical knowledge and/or experience in church leadership. He developed programs to address these issues.
- He began and oversaw a ministry of racial reconciliation at Church of the Cross.
- His interests go well beyond his own church. In 2014-2015, he initiated and led a discussion group of senior pastors in Boston on issues of sexuality.
- He has a strong and diverse network of accountability partners, executive coaches and mentors.
- Rev. Booker regularly teaches at the non-denominational all-city Thursday Morning Men's Breakfast at the Union Club.

FURTHER BACKGROUND & OBSERVATIONS

The qualities that made Rev. Booker stand out to the committee were preaching, leadership, community building and respect for the traditions of the historic church.

Rev. Booker has a heart for God's Word, and a desire to share and glorify the person and work of Jesus Christ. His strength in preaching often comes from bringing you to a particular portion of Scripture and enabling you to see it in an unexpected way. For example, in a sermon on "[The Jailer's Conversion \(Acts 16\)](#)", he asks, "Why did Paul stay? Why didn't he escape?" His answer: "For the jailer." His insight was that Christians catch the attention of others more by what they do than what they teach. And, he asks how his hearers might apply the lesson. The

application from his sermon is not a recipe for success but rather an examination of one's own life as applied to the situation.

- One of the great sources for understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of John.
 - We recommend listening to ["The Lamb of God" \(1/15/2017\)](#).
- In August 2019, Rev. Booker began a series in Galatians, a New Testament epistle which deals in detail with the changes in the relationship of mankind to God's law as a result of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection. Much of this series demonstrates Rev. Booker's solid expositional approach to God's word, as well as his heart for Christ, and his desire to see the unity of Christ's people in Christ's church.
 - We recommend listening to ["The Gospel that Transforms" \(9/8/2019\)](#) and ["Unity, Liberty and Charity" \(9/15/2019\)](#).
- In the Fall of 2016, Rev. Booker preached seven of the ten sermons in a series on the book of Numbers. This series displays much about his approach to scripture, to the relationship of the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the way that Christ is present in the entirety of scripture.
 - We recommend listening to ["Why Numbers?" \(9/18/2016\)](#), ["Provision for a Buffer" \(10/2/2016\)](#) and ["Desire-induced Rebellion" \(10/9/2016\)](#).

Rev. Booker's leadership style, as expressed to the committee, will be to lead with strength of conviction and commitment to high ideals. It will be balanced with humility, knowing he does not have all the right answers. He will value staff feedback and will clarify vision and develop strategy together with them. He will endeavor to prioritize the staff's relationships with Jesus above all else, bearing one another's burdens.

He is already a leader in the City of Boston. He has relationships throughout the City, both with established and emerging leaders. One of his references noted that he exhibits acuteness of understanding, genuinely listens to people without being judgmental, and is committed to righteousness - doing the right thing the right way. He has a very high emotional intelligence; he can have important, difficult discussions without turning people off. Another reference stressed his learning agility, which is measured by performance and potential -- the ability to take on a bigger job, learn quickly and land on one's feet.

In our interviews with Rev. Booker, it has become clear that he will care for our congregation and will nurture us with God's Word and with genuine love. He says, "I have been, and remain, a pastor, someone in the trenches with his people, who knows them and loves them and cares for them and who washes them with God's Word and administers the sacraments ... I believe it is the reality of pastoring/shepherding that makes the teaching/preaching meaningful and alive in a particular context. The pastoral warmth and embrace prepare the way for the prophetic proclamation to be effective in a community." Over the course of their ministry, Rev. Booker and his wife have had over 1,000 people in their home while at Church of the Cross. The committee was impressed by this fact, believing that it demonstrates their commitment to caring for the congregation and prioritizing community building, which has been a constant challenge at Park Street Church.

Rev. Booker values connecting the present greater church with the historical church. While having a passion for the next generation, he also wants to ground people in the Scriptures within the context of Park Street's tradition rather than focusing on making the church "relevant" or "cool." He believes that rituals, practice and habits create canyons through which the life of God can flow, and as the ruts get deeper, channels for spiritual life are formed. He cares deeply about the life of the mind and believes he can continue to develop this part of our church's tradition. Park Street Church's history in revivalism is something that deeply resonates with him. He knows revival moves all to worship, to a deeper love, to repentance and to encouragement. In short, by the grace of God, it will stir our hearts.

With regard to Anglicanism and a call to Park Street Church he says, "My heart bleeds for the unity of the church." He says he would "die for Jesus but would not die for Anglicanism. Unity matters for the sake of mission. We must work hard at expressing and maintaining unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). In a culture where few people are Christians, we must accentuate our shared convictions and that we all exist under one Head. God is not

divided and his church should not be divided. The New Testament calls us to this kind of unity on nearly every page. If God calls me to Park Street Church for His sake, then I want to be willing to follow and to make whatever accommodations he requires me to make for the sake of mission and obedience, including in the area of polity.”

REFERENCES

The committee spoke to 11 references about the character and experience of the candidate. The references included people who have known Rev. Booker since college, members of Church of the Cross, and partners in ministry.

Some selected reflections from the references:

- **Preaching:** *“He has uncanny ability to communicate clearly the strong messages of the Bible. He has the theological breadth and depth; he builds his sermons to a crescendo. I like his cadence. He is one of the best preachers I’ve heard, articulate, thoughtful, sometimes I get choked up ... Mark has application but it’s not a ‘to do’ list, rather an approach or an attitude, something thought provoking that’s not specific.”*
- *“From the pulpit, the wisdom that he conveys is timeless and is not confined to any age group; his intellect is powerful.”*
- **Dealing with difficult people:** *“I would think he would work on building the relationship first. Sometimes people need to be heard, and he is a good listener. He’s not afraid to say this is the truth, this is what we believe as a church. He would acknowledge that he hears the person but then try to align them with the organization’s priorities. He is a bridge builder.”*
- **Leadership:** *“Clearly a fine leader. I have taught leadership for 40 years at several universities.... I worked extensively with the senior leader and the senior team of one of the largest and most troubled churches in the world. Mark is tireless in working to formulate a vision that is consistent with God’s will as he understands it. He applies his impressive intellect and his active listening skills to strengthen and support the vision. He executes with energetic passion and adapts as plans meet with failure and success. Finally, he has the one thing I exhort all aspiring leaders to cultivate, a capacity to reflect and learn from his successes and failures. His learning agility is the source of the strengths I cited.”*
- *“He has and develops clarity of vision. He is enthusiastic. He understands that a primary role of leadership is to love those he leads. He operates from a foundation of service. He has a passion to see others grow. He is willing to speak the truth in love. He is able to tackle the tough challenges and issues. He is open to areas of growth and input from others. He is respectful and can submit to authority above him. People want to follow him and they do follow him.”*
- *“He does not lead by an overwhelming personality. He leads by the conviction that God has made His will known and these are the necessary steps to follow Him.”*
- **Integrity:** *“Mark was the Rhodes scholar nominee from his college. You would have thought he was applying to Wycliffe translators. I said basically – you cannot have a Christian witness there if you want to get a scholarship. I am not going to hide the fact that you are a Christian – but you’ve got that too far out there in the front, but we want to be wise. He basically said, I can’t hide who I am – that is the biggest part of who I am. He said, ‘If I don’t get the scholarship because I overemphasized Jesus, that’s a great reason not to get it.’”*
- **Communication:** *“He has a presence and that’s important, but he also has that EQ that if you are with him 1:1 or in a small group, he is tuned into you. He is a great listener and is also thoughtful and mindful of things.”*
“He is a very clear communicator and he thinks about what he is going to say. He is very intellectual and can hold his own with Harvard grads.” *“Even in mundane business meetings, Mark is wise in how he communicates. Definitely a strong suit for him.”*
- **Personal soul care:** *“He’s very disciplined in studying Scripture and in his own personal spiritual life. It’s one thing to be proficient as a pastor and fool people with your knowledge, and another thing to pay great attention to your own soul and continue to grow spiritually while you also help others to grow.”*
- **Collaboration with local Churches:** *“Nothing but respect from other pastors in the city. That’s not an exaggeration. He has a heart to see the church flourish in the city. That’s a reality and he puts that into practice. I’ve seen it first-hand. Mark is an apostolic figure.”*

- **Relating to younger people:** *"Mark relates to young people incredibly well. A lot of people who participate in Noah's Ark are young people and college students, and Mark was very good at working with them. This especially reflects Mark's ability to understand the context he is in and the people he is with, and to work in it and with them."*
- **Shepherding/Pastoring:** *"Mark is extraordinarily pastoral in the best senses of that word: able to work gently but firmly and with a commitment to the truth. ... He is particularly skillful in counseling people in duress or pondering difficult life decisions, not because he has all the answers but because he is able to deploy theological first principles in loving and wise ways."*
- *"He is one of the most devoted and proactive shepherds I have experienced. His home has always been (thanks also to his remarkable and devoted wife) a haven for his flock."*

CURRICULUM VITAE

Reverend Mark L. Booker

EDUCATION

- 2003 to 2004 **University of Oxford**, Oxford, England
Master of Studies, Theology, with Distinction
Thesis: "The Use of the Fear of the Lord in Paul and the Background of the Jewish Wisdom Tradition"
- 2001 to 2003 **University of Oxford**, Oxford, England
Master of Arts, Theology, First Class
Award: Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, \$25,000, 2001-2002
- 1994 to 1998 **Rhodes College**, Memphis, Tennessee
Bachelor of Arts, Economics, *magna cum laude*
Minors: Philosophy, Math
Award: Bellingerath Scholar, Full Tuition, Room & Board for 4 years

MINISTRY AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2009 – present **Rector and Church Planter, Church of the Cross** **Boston, MA**
Planted and currently lead an Anglican congregation in the heart of Boston. Developed a 10-month discipleship cohort to equip church members with biblical knowledge and the ability to engage sensitive cultural issues. Developed a 1-year catechesis program to train church attenders in the foundations of the Christian faith. Lead monthly meetings of our Parish Council and monthly gatherings of a larger group of ministry leaders. For the past two years, have been leading the church in a ministry of racial reconciliation. Led a 10-person discussion group for senior pastors in Boston in 2014-2015 on the issue of sexuality. Member of the Greater Things for Greater Boston Steering Committee. Advisory Board Member for Young Life Boston. Monthly teacher at the Thursday Morning Men's Bible Study. Regular chapel speaker at Park Street School.
- 2016 to 2019 **Regional Missional Strategy Leader, Diocese of Christ Our Hope** **Boston, MA**
Oversee the mission strategy of the New England / New York region of our diocese. Work with the bishop and other pastors to develop strategy for using diocesan funds for church planting and church health/expansion in our region.
- 2007 to 2011 **Network Leader, Northeast Network, Anglican Mission** Northeast United States Under the Bishop's oversight, exercised administrative and pastoral leadership over the churches in this network. Served on leadership council at national level of Anglican Mission. Managed and oversaw executive team of clergy that led the network.
- 2005 to 2009 **Assistant Pastor, The Church of the Resurrection** **Washington, DC**
Responsibilities included general pastoral duties, regular teaching and preaching, administration of the sacraments, oversight of small groups and ministries of justice and mercy to our city. Designed and co-authored an 18-lesson small group study entitled, "Living Missionally." Conceived of and led a multi-church "Loving Your Neighbor" Symposium attended by more than 500 young Christians. Led trip to visit our sister church in Rwanda in August 2007. Ordained as a presbyter on April 2, 2006.
- 2004 to 2005 **Adjunct Faculty in Biblical Studies, Belhaven University** **Jackson, Mississippi**

Courses taught: Old Testament Principles (BIB 220), New Testament Principles (BIB 221), and Evangelism and Disciple Building (BIB 412).

- 2004 to 2005 **Teaching Intern and Deacon, Holy Trinity Anglican Church** **Jackson, Mississippi**
Responsible for regular preaching, design of worship services, leading worship services, teaching Bible studies, and oversight of small groups. Ordained as deacon on September 12, 2005.
- 2002 **Interim College Pastor, First Evangelical Church** **Memphis, Tennessee**
Responsible for ministry to college students at this church between first two academic years at Oxford. Regular Bible teaching during Sunday college class and weekly Bible study.
- 1997 **Missions in Africa** **Lesotho, Southern Africa**
Spent six weeks in Mokhotlong, Lesotho, preaching daily to people in the city and surrounding villages, as well as in the local prison.

ADDITIONAL MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1998 to 2001 **Adventure Program Director, Noah's Ark** **Buena Vista, Colorado**
Provided leadership for the backpacking and rock-climbing programs of this company which operates in the Colorado Rockies and serves over 23,000 people per year. Responsibilities included overseeing leadership team, training and evaluating guides, developing a curriculum for and leading a course for seminary students, managing program operations, and interviewing, hiring, and firing staff. Led weekly worship and spiritual development for our mostly Christian staff of 165 during the summer.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

My goal as a follower of Jesus is not to be original but to take my place in the communion of saints, to believe what Christians have always believed about God and his work in the world—as this was taught and lived by Jesus, then the Apostles, and then preserved for us through their Spirit-inspired writings, i.e. Scripture. The Apostles' and Nicene creeds are shorthand, abbreviated, condensed summaries of Scripture that have the consensus of the universal church. They are a biblically-generated tradition that helps us to read and understand Scripture, bringing focus and attention to the key points that Scripture communicates about God and his work. This is who God is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is what the triune God has done and is doing in Christ and by the Spirit: creating, ruling, redeeming, and renewing (re-creating) the world. I like to think of creeds as a highlight reel. They hit the high points but they themselves point to and derive from the broader and more complete narrative (Scripture) which they are summarizing.

I understand the creeds to be self-involving. To say, "I believe," is to assent to the truths that the creed communicates about God and his work. But it's more than that. To say, "I believe," involves yielding to and trusting in this God and his work. His story is my story. My life belongs to him and I trust him with my past, my present, and my future. And, "I believe," includes dimensions of allegiance and obedience. This God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is my God. Jesus is my lord, and that means I seek to follow him and to live consistently with his teachings and his redemptive work in the world. The creeds were never meant to be dry compilations of truths about God. They were intended to be self-involving statements of faith, a kind of pledge of allegiance to God and his kingdom that entails trust and ongoing participation in that kingdom.

I offer the following as an articulation of unoriginal but beautiful truths about God and his work that shape my life and the lives of all who confess Jesus as Lord—in the form of a brief commentary on the Apostles' Creed. In short, I affirm trinitarian orthodoxy without qualification as the truth about God that he has revealed to us through the person of his Son and through the God-breathed words of Scripture (2 Tim 3.16). It grieves me when Christians depart from the beauty, depth, and richness of orthodoxy, and it is a particular passion of mine to teach this faith to younger believers that they might be deeply rooted in the word of God, able to withstand the wind and waves constantly crashing around them (Eph 4.14).

I believe in God...

First, there is one God existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14). That is to say that God is triune. We see this in the structure of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty...in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord...in the Holy Spirit." The three persons of the Trinity are distinct in personality, equal in divinity, and unified in being. The heart of the Christian gospel is that, through Christ and by the Spirit, we are privileged to share in the life of the triune God. The metaphors of adoption and marriage are both used in Scripture to communicate this kind of intimate sharing in God's life.

the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Second, God is the omnipotent Father, the one for whom nothing will be impossible (Gen 18.14, Jer 32.17, Lk 1.37). By his Word, God created matter and God will redeem matter, as first witnessed in the resurrection of Jesus. The gnostic tendencies of the modern church (as experienced in a radical sacred/secular divide or spiritual/physical divide) need to be rejected as sub-Christian understandings of the world. As Abraham Kuyper famously remarked, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign overall, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Third, there is one Lord, Jesus, the Messiah, who is fully God and fully man. He is the Word who was with God in the beginning and who was God (Jn 1.1-2). This Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1.14). He is the sole and perfect mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim 2.5), uniting in his one divine person the divine and human natures for the sake of our redemption and salvation.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead.

Fourth, this Jesus actually and truly died on a Roman cross in the days of Pontius Pilate. This death was for us and for sin. Jesus dies as our perfect substitute and he atones for our sins, propitiating the wrath of God (Jn 3.36, 1 Jn 2.2). For all who have faith, who believe in him (Jn 1.12), this death (and resurrection—we cannot separate the two) brings about cleansing (i.e. forgiveness) and liberation, thus dealing with the great problems of sin (guilt and bondage), making us right with God (Gal 2.16), and bringing us from death into life, both present (Eph 2.5) and eternal (Jn 3.16). This saving, redeeming work is by God's grace, a gift we did not earn or deserve in any way (Eph 2.8-9, Gal 2.21).

On the third day he rose again.

Fifth, Jesus rose from the dead. This was a bodily, physical resurrection. I generally refer to the cross as the moment of victory and to the resurrection as the victory lap. The devil and sin were defeated at the cross and the resurrection is "exhibit A" that the cross was, in fact, a victory and not a defeat. Life conquers death. The resurrection is the first act of the new creation, promised long ago (Isa 11 and Isa 65) and to be consummated in the future (Rev 21-22), but that new creation is already upon us (2 Cor 5.17, Gal 6.15).

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Sixth, Jesus ascended into heaven and he is presently (and bodily) seated at the right hand of the Father. The priests of the Old Testament stood to offer sacrifices, but, having finished his sacrificial work, Jesus, our great high priest, sits down (Heb 10.11-12). To be seated also implies royal rule, as a king sits on his throne. And Jesus sits down as the one who is now lord over the cosmos, exalted above all powers and authority (Eph 1.20-23). Peter's first sermon at Pentecost finishes with the affirmation that "God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2.36). Consequently, my shorthand summary of the gospel is "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12.3). As priest, Jesus continues to make intercession for us and he brings us, in himself, into God's presence. As king, Jesus directs and informs his mission by the Holy Spirit, a mission into which every believer is enlisted.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Seventh, Jesus will return to be the judge of the living and the dead. In his first coming, he came to save the world (Jn 3.17). In his second coming, he will come to judge the world (Acts 17.31, 1 Cor 4.5, 2 Cor 5.10). This judgment will expunge from the world all that is evil and wicked and opposed to Jesus's rule, including those who have rejected him. This is an integral and necessary part of the renewal of creation. This will also be a day of vindication for those who have walked faithfully with him by grace through faith (Ps 135.14).

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Eighth, the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the risen and ascended Jesus, is an agent of life for the church and for individual believers. The Holy Spirit gives life to "the holy catholic church." To these two adjectives, holy and catholic, the Nicene creed adds "one" and "apostolic." It's this corporate body that the Spirit creates, animates, and sustains. It is *apostolic* in that it is built on the foundation of the apostles and their Spirit-inspired/enabled witness (Eph 2.19-20). It is *one* in that there is only one body with many members (1 Cor 12) and there is only one head, who is Jesus (Col 1.18). We must strive to maintain this unity (Eph 4.3). It is *holy* in that it is to be like God

who is holy (1 Pt 1.15-16) and not like our sin-saturated world (Rom 12.2). The creed speaks of the communion of “saints,” i.e. the *holy* ones. We are, in fact, made holy by Christ’s death, and this holiness is now to be expressed in a life characterized by self-giving love for God and love for neighbor (Mk 12.29-31). It is *catholic* in that Jesus is lord of all and overall, and this church includes people from every tongue, tribe, nation, socio-economic class, etc. (Rev 7.9)

The Spirit also gives life to individuals, enabling us to be born again to a living hope (1 Pt 1.3) by bringing us into Christ, in whom we have the forgiveness of sins (Col 1.14) and empowering us to live in accordance with God’s life-giving will (Rom 8.4). This Spirit gives us life in Christ now and life in Christ forever, on into the future—the resurrection of the body (Phil 3.20-21, not anti-matter!) and the life everlasting. The Spirit is the guarantee of the fullness of life to come (2 Cor 1.22, Eph 1.13-14, Rom 8.23).

On Scripture:

I affirm Park Street Church’s Statement of Faith: “We reverently receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and believe them to be the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” I also affirm the statement of the Park Street Church bylaws as follows, “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.” Scripture is God’s inspired word, given to us to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest for the sake of God’s life being formed more deeply in us. Scripture reveals God and his works to us, primarily in the person of Christ, and it reveals God’s will to us, in terms of how we are to live as children of God in response to his grace. That is to say, Scripture is primarily about gospel (i.e. God) and guidance.

My entire ministry is built upon the conviction that Scripture is the primary means by which the church is strengthened to know, love, follow, and worship the triune God. As Jesus says, quoting Deuteronomy 8.3, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4.4). The Spirit will never lead the church to affirm anything that contradicts the teaching of Scripture, and, consequently, nothing contrary to Scripture should ever be taught in the church.