

## **Biography Winifred Rinehart**

I am a child of the Presbyterian Church. My father was a Presbyterian minister. My maternal grandfather was a Presbyterian minister and missionary. My maternal grandfather was a Presbyterian elder. I was born in West Virginia in what was known as the West Virginia Mountain Project. We moved to Philadelphia when I was two and to Michigan shortly after World War II.

When I was 8 or 9, I decided that I wanted to become a minister. However, I was told that women could not become ministers. I thought that I gave up the idea. But when, during my junior year at Oberlin College in Ohio, the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church voted to allow the ordination of women as ministers of word and sacrament, I discovered that I hadn't, in fact, lost my sense of call to ministry. So, upon graduation, I enrolled in McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Still, I wasn't quite ready to take the plunge into ordination. When I finished seminary, I went to Honolulu where I taught Christian Education for two years. Then I returned home to seek a call. I was called to serve two small churches in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and was ordained in February of 1963.

At that point in time, I thought it might be better to serve on a staff with a male pastor. I did so in Green Bay and in Superior, Wisconsin. But it seemed in those situations, for many people, that I was a D.C.E. with a different title. So I went back to college to learn more about teaching and perhaps enable myself to serve as a tentmaker.

During this period, I met the man who became my husband. Unfortunately, he lived 100 miles from the churches I was serving. After my marriage, I resigned my position and moved to the farm. My husband and I alternated moving with one another. When we sold the farm, he moved with me to southeastern Michigan and completed his education. Then I moved with him to Wyoming where we served as house parents at a youth home. When his health deteriorated, he again moved with me to serve a church in Minnesota and then two churches in South Dakota.

I retired in 2004, and my husband died in 2006. In the fall of 2008, my son and daughter-in-law asked me to come to Rock Hill to help supervise her niece who was living with them at the time.

In addition to my son in Rock Hill, I have 3 step-children, 6 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

## **Statement of Faith Winifred Rinehart**

I believe in God, whom we know as Father/Son/Spirit. I believe that God is the Source of all life as Creator, Redeemer, and Enlivener. I believe that God is also the Source of strength, of wisdom, and of faith, hope, joy, and, above all, love. I believe that God's will is that we should have life and have it abundantly. While I don't believe that God wills bad things to happen, I do believe that God wills that we live in an orderly world with natural consequences. God also wills that we have freedom to choose our path even when we make poor choices with bad consequences for ourselves and others. However, I also believe that when we remain open to God, God can bring good out of anything.

I believe Jesus Christ is both my Lord and my Savior. I believe that he is fully divine and also fully human. He experienced suffering and sorrow; hunger and fatigue; rejection and frustration. He also experienced love and joy; beauty and peace. He knew the power and reassurance of God's presence and support in his life, and the emptiness and desolation of feeling that God was not there. He was tempted, deeply and truly tempted to seek an easier and more comfortable life, but he never faltered or succumbed, even in the face of death itself.

I believe that Jesus died, really died. But I also believe that he conquered death, that he lives and reigns with God the Father/Son/Spirit. I believe that in God's time we will stand before Christ as our Judge and Redeemer.

I believe that the church of Jesus Christ is called to be the channel of Christ's continuing presence on earth. We do not exist primarily for our own salvation, although that is certainly our goal and desire. Rather, we exist to demonstrate, proclaim, and share the good news of abundant life that God has offered to us and to all.

We are supported in this life by the proclamation of God's word in scripture; by the sacraments which demonstrate, express, and seal that word in physical form to and through all our senses, by the community of believers, which strengthens and up builds one another in love; and by God's presence with us in prayer, in Bible study, and in a multitude of ways of which we are sometimes not even aware.

I believe my life lies in God's hands, and is surrounded by and filled with God's love.