

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:**

**WE believe that God is Spirit and they that worship God must worship in Spirit and Truth.**

**WE believe that God created all people to dwell in peace on the whole Earth.**

**WE believe that God is Love,  
and everyone that loves, abides in God and God in them.**

**WE believe that in Jesus there is the way, the truth, and the life.**

**WE believe that if we walk in the light,  
as Jesus walked in the light,  
we have fellowship with one another.**

**WE believe in God,  
the Creator of our spirits and the life of all that is:  
infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, and  
working everywhere for righteousness and peace and love.**

**WE seek to know the will of God and to walk in God's ways:  
to work and to pray for the progress of knowledge,  
the promotion of justice,  
the reign of peace,  
and the realization of human interrelationship.**

And we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and life everlasting.

**Meditation:**

If we had 50 cents for every time someone said,  
they just feel better, more at peace by simply stepping foot  
on these grounds...  
We'd be on easy street!

I can't tell you how many people have said that to me over the years.

And according to the book written by Laura Kerr,  
Paul Sanders felt that same positive, peaceful energy  
when *he* first stepped on the land,  
when it was still owned by Ernest Warner.

Personally, I believe the Center sits on a vortex of grace.  
and we do our best, when we let this grace  
flow through our activities and our programs.

All the goodness that happens around here,  
all the healing,  
all the creativity  
all the fellowship  
all the celebration  
all the comforting  
all the animals birthing  
children laughing  
eggs laying...

**all the fun that happens around here  
isn't *only* because of our brilliance and hard work,  
...although that helps....  
it is because of the grace and the power and the mystery of Love.**

**The Center has been a place that, for 86 years,  
people have come to find themselves and to renew their faith  
in Life, humanity and God.**

**and we all know that...that is why we are here.  
The Profession of Faith that we read together today was first read  
at the dedication of this beautiful Chapel in 1950...**

**and I will admit to you  
it is a profession of faith that I can honestly speak  
without crossing my fingers behind my back  
or keeping silent at different times.**

**I can honestly say I believe in this Confession.  
and there is lots that I could reflect upon,  
but here's what I'd like to offer a few thoughts on...**

**All the statements in the Confession  
begin with: WE believe.**

**The whole tone of the Profession is communal, not individualistic.  
That is hugely important..  
Perhaps never more important than now.  
The Center exists as a community of people.**

**Sure...perhaps we come here desiring to become a better potter  
or a better farmer  
or a better prayer,  
although all of that often happens...**

**but along the way, almost without our noticing  
we form new friendships, lasting friendships.**

**People begin to welcome us  
and to notice if we aren't in our usual class,  
or with our usual animal,  
or in our usual pew.**

**Frank Sanders used to use a quote for chapel from the sitcom Cheers:  
You wanna go to a place where everybody knows your name.  
That's the Center...  
we find ourselves in the midst of community...  
we find that we belong somewhere...  
we can be ourselves and people accept us and  
that is more important than we often recognize.**

**Public Health officials have started categorizing Loneliness as a  
public health issue and it is on the rise world wide.**

**How many times have you asked someone: "How are you"  
and they respond, "crazy busy"  
We are ALL so busy doing these days,  
we often don't have time for our children or our elders.**

**We don't know our neighbors because no one on the block is home.**

**We rush from work to activities, come home exhausted and start all over again the next day...**

**And this is why The Center exists.**

**The Rev. Paul Sanders and his wife Elizabeth knew that people were healthier physically, mentally and spiritually when they were connected to nature and to each other.**

**Being part of a community is life giving and life sustaining.**

**That is why our motto is All Are Welcome, and we mean it.**

**If you are tired, stressed, lonely.**

**You are welcome here.**

**If you are searching a new friend or**

**a new relationship with your God...you are welcome here.**

**If you are searching for personal healing or personal growth...**

**You are welcome here.**

**But I will warn you:**

**You will find here much, much more than the reason that brought you here.**

**You will find a community of people**

**who know your name.**

**You will find a circle of friends,**

**a gathering animal lovers,**

earth caretakers  
artists,  
and God seekers  
who share your passion for leading a fuller, kinder,  
richer, and more connected life

When you come to The Center  
whether it be to walk the Labyrinth,  
go to the Farm,  
take an art class  
come to chapel,  
attend a luncheon  
or simply be...  
you will find yourself inhaling a little more deeply  
and exhaling a little more completely.

The Center exists as a community of people,  
gathered on holy ground  
so that the Mysterious Grace of the Holy can freely flow  
and offer a peace the world cannot give.  
So of course, there is nothing left to do but say: Thank you! amen.