

## **What We Believe**

### **The Bible**

The Bible is God's word to all humanity. It exists because Jesus Christ himself is the living Word, and the Bible points to Him as the Way of salvation. The Bible was written by human authors who were under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit so that what they wrote is the word of God. Thus the Bible, as a whole and in all its parts, is the divinely inspired, revealed and inerrant Word of God and is the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life. No other writings are vested with such divine authority.

(Matthew 5:18; John 5:39, 10:35; II Peter 1:20,21; II Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:105; Psalm 126; Proverbs 30:5)

### **God**

God is the Maker and Ruler of the universe. He is personal, yet infinite and perfect. He exists eternally and equally as one God, three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God, at the core of his existence, is love. (Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19; I Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 4:8)

### **Humanity**

We are all created in the image of God, intended to be like Him in character. We are the supreme object of God's creation, and the objects of his love. Although humanity has tremendous potential for good, we are all part of a broken humanity that has turned away from God. This disease of brokenness the Bible calls "sin". Sin separates us from God and results in death, both physical and spiritual. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23, 5:12-19, 6:23; Isaiah 59:1,2)

### **Eternity**

We are all created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God by grace. The experience of eternal separation from God is called Hell. Heaven is the experience of blessedness and eternal life with God.

(John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15 (Hell); Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:27)

### **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is both true God and true Man, the only Son of God and the only Savior of the world. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself for the sins of all by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead after three days, demonstrating His power over sin and death. He was seen by over 500 people and returned to the father to prepare a place for us. (Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; John 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; I Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11)

### **Salvation**

Salvation comes to us entirely as a gift, received through faith (trust) in Jesus Christ. We call this gift "grace". We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. It is through faith alone, apart from works of the law that we find ourselves in a right standing before God, forgiven of our sins, and promised eternal life with Him.

(Romans 3:28, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6; John 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:21)

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### **About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity is equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to make people aware of their sin, works to call humanity into a saving faith in Jesus Christ, empowers believers to grow in sanctification, bestows gifts for the ministry of the Church, inspires love for one another, and works to bring glory to Jesus Christ. The Christian seeks to live under the Spirit's control daily.

(II Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1)

### **The Church**

Jesus Christ is the head and the source of its life. The Church is the living body of Christ in the world. It is the gathering of saints worldwide in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. The Church in the world is both visible and invisible; ultimately, there is only one Church. (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:1-16; Colossians 1:15-20) (Click on the Audio Messages tab of the website to listen to pastor's messages.)

### **The Sacraments**

The Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are visible ways in which God works forgiveness of sins, life and salvation into our lives. Holy Baptism cleanses us from sin, unites us to Jesus in his death and resurrection, and bestows on us the Holy Spirit, who works faith in our hearts. Holy Communion is open to all who trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, confess their sins and acknowledge the real presence of the true body and blood of Christ, received in, with and under the bread and the wine. This is not a symbolic eating and drinking, but an actual partaking in Christ's body and blood. (Matthew 19:13-15, 28:19; Acts 2:38-39, 16:14-15, 30-33; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:1-4; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-26; Titus 3:5-8; 1 Peter 3:18-22)

### **Discipleship**

As members of Christ's Church, we are called to live out the Great Commandment – to love God with all our heart and soul and our neighbors as ourselves; and the Great Commission – to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all Jesus commanded us. This is called discipleship, and it is what every Christian is called to. It simply means following after Jesus. Making disciples is at the very heart of who we are as a church. (Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 22:37-40)

### **Human Sexuality**

Although the image of God in man has been significantly damaged by sin, God's imprint nevertheless survives and is being restored through the work of Christ, by the power of the Spirit. All people, being made in God's image, are designed to reflect His image in community, home and society. Since God's image in man is expressed as both male and female, sexual wholeness and healing are essential to God's redemptive work in us. We believe that the family, celibate singleness and faithful heterosexual marriage are the patterns God has designed to express His restoration through Christ.

(Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 1:18-32; Galatians 3:26-29; Colossians 3:4-5)

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### **The Intermediate State**

When a child of God dies, he/she passes immediately into the blessed presence of Christ, there to enjoy fellowship with the Savior until the day of resurrection and glorious transformation of the body. (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:25-29; I Corinthians 15:35-58; II Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:19-26, 3:20-21; II Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-22:5)

### **The Last Things**

When history has run the course laid out for it by God's design, Jesus Christ will return in power and glory to judge the world in complete victory over sin, death and Satan. At that time those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will enter the presence of God to enjoy his eternal fellowship. Those who have not believed will be eternally separated from God. The new heavens and new earth will be gloriously revealed, and God's plan will be complete. *Even so, Come Lord Jesus!* (Psalm 2:7-9, 22:27-28; Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46; Mark 13:24-27; John 14:12, John 17:20-26; Acts 1:6-11; Romans 11:25-32; I Corinthians 15:20-58; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; II Thessalonians 1:3-12; I Peter 4:5; Revelation 1:7, 7:9-14, 22:1-21)

### **Being Lutheran**

As Lutherans, we care deeply about connecting people with God's good news, the Gospel. The central message of scripture is grace (God's unearned love), expressed in the doctrine of justification by faith alone, apart from works. We follow the Lutheran confessions of faith known as the Book of Concord, because they are the true interpretation of the Bible's message. We celebrate and live out our Lutheran identity, and also recognize and work with other Christian churches and ministries near and far. (Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 2:8-9)