



Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church

Core Beliefs

What we believe

In our core beliefs we are bound together in a community of faith.

(Eph 4:4-6 - There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one HOPE when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all...)

In our non-core beliefs we are charitable to one another.

(Rom 15:7; Rom 14:1, 13, 22 - Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. ... without passing judgment on disputable matters. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block your brother's way. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.)

The Bible:

We believe and teach that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of the church's proclamation, faith and life. The Bible is true, reliable and dependable for believing and living as followers of Jesus Christ. *(2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

God:

We believe, teach and confess there is one God who is the Creator of us and all that exists. God has revealed himself to us as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God expresses his power through what he has created. God makes himself known to us through the person of Jesus, the Lord and Savior of us all, and through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. *(Genesis 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22; Psalms 90:2; Colossians 1:16)*

Jesus Christ:

We believe, teach and confess Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Lord. This is expressed in the words of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead (or into hell). On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead." *(Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 1Cor.15:3, 4; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 1: 9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13)*

The Holy Spirit:

We believe, teach and confess the Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God at work in the world, especially in human lives. The Spirit is at work in convicting sinners of their need for God's grace, and in empowering people for effective Christian living. The Spirit produces "fruit" of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the lives of believers. *(2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 17; John 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13, 5:17-21; Galatians 5:25)*

Human Beings and sin:

We believe and teach men and women were originally created good in the image and likeness of God but rebelled against God through personal disobedience. This rebellion led to their alienation from God and the corruption of their spiritual nature which renders them incapable of pleasing God on their own merit or saving themselves. This rebellion and fall of man took place at the time of Adam, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are in need of the saving grace of God. (*Genesis. 1:27; Psalms 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:14*)

Salvation:

We believe, teach and confess that salvation describes God's activity in restoring us to a right relationship with himself. God forgives us and gives us the promise of eternal life. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God provides salvation which makes it possible for us to be saved from the eternal consequences and power of sin. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus if we repent of our sins, and believe and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. (*John 3:16; John 14:6; Romans 6:2; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30*)

Law and Gospel:

We believe it is through the law that God creates order in the world, establishes 'what is right' and reveals how we should live to please him. The law also reveals our sinfulness and need for a savior. It is through the Gospel promise "Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt" that God brings comfort and gives life through the message of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus. (*1 Timothy 1:9; Roman 3:20; Psalm 119:9; Romans 8:3*)

Christian Living:

We believe Christians are called by God to live in a way that is pleasing to him. The Christian life is one of dependence on the Holy Spirit, who equips people with wisdom, discernment and power to do the will of God. The Christian life is also expressed in responsible management of time, money, and abilities as well as actions and behaviors that reveal the Gospel, help prevent and alleviate suffering and work to make creation as God intended. Good works "reflect" God's presence in our lives, but they do not save nor "affect" God's presence in our lives. (*John 13:34-35, John 15:5, Ephesians 2:9-10, Galatians 5:22-23*)

The Church:

We believe the Church is the people of God, the Body of Christ, created and sustained by God himself. All Christians are part of the church universal (catholic). The Biblical expression of being a member of the Church is faithful participation in worship, regular fellowship and generous support of the mission of one's congregation. (*Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 4:11-12, Hebrews 10:25*)

Sacraments:

We believe God also gives His grace to us through the sacraments. We understand a sacrament to be something that Christ Himself commanded us to do, that involves a visible means (water, bread and wine), and which bestows God's forgiveness and new life to the believer. The Lutheran church celebrates two sacraments, Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

Baptism is a sign and means of incorporation into the Christian life and the Church. Through Baptism God makes us his own as we are joined with Christ and with his people. Both children and adults are candidates for Baptism, which means we baptize both believers and the children of believers. We do not "re-baptize" people, but accept the validity of all Christian Baptisms. We teach that it is imperative for children who are baptized to come to a personal faith in Christ in order for the promises of Baptism to be effective. Even though we teach

the importance and necessity of Baptism for Christian discipleship, we do not teach that the un-baptized are lost from God. (*Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 6:1-11*)

Holy Communion is the meal of grace God uses to reassure, renew, and strengthen us in our relationship with him. It is also a sign and means of our unity and fellowship with other believers. We teach that in and with the bread and wine of this Sacrament we receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. God fills us with the life and presence of Christ through this precious meal. We are to receive this Sacrament with a believing heart, trusting that God loves and forgives us more than we can imagine and more than we deserve. All believing adult Christians are invited to participate in Holy Communion along with children who have received instruction. (*1 Corinthians 11:23-25, Matthew 26:26-29*)

The Things to Come:

We affirm the words of the Apostles' Creed that Christ "will come again to judge both the living and the dead," and we believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." As Christians, we believe that every day is an opportunity to live in a vital, loving, and growing relationship with God. We do not fear the future. "Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Romans 8:39; 1 John 4:16-19*)

Our Lutheran Identity:

We teach the Lutheran themes of grace alone, faith alone, word alone and Christ alone. We are affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and are involved cooperatively in the mission of the Church around the world. Along with LCMC we believe, teach, and confess the gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian) and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.

Practicing Our Faith:

Government - The Bible teaches that governmental authority is given by God and directs us to be subject to governmental laws and to participate in the formation of constructive government. (*Romans 13:1-7*)

Justice - The Bible teaches all people are valuable in God's eyes and directs us to care for the poor and needy, and stand against personal or community injustice. When there is more than one Christian approach to addressing a social issue, we encourage and support individuals to advocate as they are led to do so by the Holy Spirit. (*Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 14:16; 1 Corinthians 10:29*)

Preserving Life - The Bible teaches that life is a gift from God and directs us to value life, be life giving and choose life as a first approach to all decisions. As such we reject Euthanasia, Abortion, and Genocide. (*Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Deuteronomy 5:17; Jeremiah 1:5, Proverbs 31:8*)

Sexuality - Sexuality is a gift God graciously bestows on humanity for the sake of love, devotion, and procreation. We believe the teaching of the Scriptures and the nearly 2,000 year old traditions of the Church are clear on such matters and neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions grant any authorization to the church to recognize as divinely approved any relationship other than the marriage of one man and one woman for the full expression of human sexuality.

(*Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; and Mark 10:2-9*)

Possessions/Wealth - The Bible teaches that all we have is a gift from God, directs us away from greed and directs us toward joyfully returning 10% of our financial resources to the work of the Lord. (*Deuteronomy 8:18, Malachi 3:10*)