

## What We Believe

Last Updated Saturday, 17 April 2010

### OUR LUTHERAN FAITH-

is formed by the following documents: The Holy Scriptures, The Unaltered Books of the Lutheran Confessions, The Book of Concord, and The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds.

We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation. We accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine, all churches that likewise accept its teachings. We accept the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord namely, The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures.

### THE BIBLE -

is the inspired Word of God. Inspired by God's spirit speaking through their authors, the Old and New Testament record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world. The Bible is the authoritative norm for our proclamations, faith, and life. It is the most important of all the ways God's person and presence are revealed to us.

### GOD -

is one God, eternally existent in three persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We believe there is one divine essence which is called and which is God; uncreated, eternal, indivisible, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the source of all truth, and the creator and sustainer of all things visible and invisible.

### JESUS CHRIST -

is God's Word, revealed to us in the flesh; both fully divine and fully human (with a rational soul and human body). He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, suffered for our sins, and died a redeeming death on an executioner's cross. He rose again, bodily, on the third day to demonstrate that his death was a sufficient sacrifice. He ascended into heaven where he is seated at the right hand of God. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man, and there is salvation through no other (Solus Christus). He guarantees salvation and eternal life to all people who receive Him as their Savior.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT -

is the third person of the Trinity, coequal and co-eternal, neither made nor created, who calls, leads, gathers, comforts, guides, enlightens, and sanctifies us in the faith. God sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts as compensation for the absence of Christ to defend us against the devil and the power of sin.

### MAN -

was created by God, a perfect human being with both a body and soul, but fell into sin and separated himself from God. We are sinful and cannot claim otherwise. As a result, man needs to be rescued from his sinful condition through God's saving grace and forgiveness.

### SALVATION -

is our spiritual, eternal deliverance from sin, granted by God through his unmerited grace (Sola gratia), through faith in Christ alone (Sola fide), on the basis of Scripture alone (Sola scriptura).

### THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS -

is our committed belief in the future, visible return from heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ. At this coming He will resurrect the dead, hold the last judgment, and fully establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

### FAITH -

is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). Faith does not merely signify knowledge of Christ, but signifies both a belief and effect--namely the forgiveness of sins; that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ.

### JUSTIFICATION -

is being declared guiltless by God. We receive it through Christ's redeeming death on the cross, to the total exclusion of any other means by which we might become righteous before God.

#### FORGIVENESS -

is a constituent part of Justification given by God. Through the work of Christ our guilt, our penalty of eternal wrath because of sin, and the "curse of the law" (Gal 3:10-14) have been removed.

#### HOLY COMMUNION &ndash;

is a Sacrament open to any Christian who believes that Jesus Christ is fully present "in, under, and with" the bread and wine and comes to forgive us of our sins and grant us eternal life (communion also called the Eucharist meaning "thanksgiving" in Greek).

#### BAPTISM -

is truly God's gift, drawing us into Christ's church and bestowing upon us forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. Because of this rich promise from God, baptism of infants or adults is a Sacrament we happily perform. By water and spirit, we are reborn children of God and made members of Christ's Body.

#### ORDINATION OF WOMEN -

is beneficial, desirable, historical, and enlivens the church body. We proudly support those women who have accepted the call to ministry in their lives.

#### HEAVEN -

is our afterlife that will differentiate between believers and non-believers.

#### ETERNITY -

is forever--beyond any limits of time.