

What We Believe

Growth Lutheran Network

Statement of Faith

The Bible

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, as originally given, is the inspired inerrant Word of God and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct.

The Creeds

We accept the creeds of the Church universal. The Athanasian Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed

Confessional Writings

The Lutheran Confessions included in the Book of Concord 1580 are a summary of Bible doctrines. We accept them as a pattern for correctly understanding the bible, doctrinal positions and church practice.

God

There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

God the Father

God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator of the universe, to whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject.

God the Son

Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God and redeemer of humanity. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself and to establish His eternal kingdom. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person eternally one with the Father and with the Son. Dwelling in the redeemed believer in Jesus the Christ through the Word of God He convicts people of sin, persuades them to confess their sinfulness to God and calls them to faith through the Gospel. He regenerates, sanctifies, and preserves believers in the one true faith. He comforts, guides, equips, directs, and empowers the church to fulfill the great commission to reach out to all peoples everywhere.

Humanity and Sin

God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became self-centred sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. Without redemption in Christ Jesus we are subject to the devil, and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God.

Salvation

Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Redemption

The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin are brought to the human race through the means of grace, namely the Word and the Sacraments.

Justification

Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness.

God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification.

Sanctification

Sanctification is God's gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit within and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory.

Law and Gospel

Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, to be justified, to enter the process of sanctification, and to have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin, convicts them of their guilt of sin, and calls them to repent and believe, inviting and enabling them to accept God's grace in Christ. Each one who thus believes is instantly forgiven and credited with Christ's righteousness. The Word then teaches and guides the believer to lead a godly life.

Sacraments

Baptism

By grace we are daily given the power to overcome sinful desires and live a new life in Christ. Those who do not continue to live in God's grace need to be brought again to repentance and faith through the Law and Gospel. Because the sinfulness of human nature passes on from generation to generation and the promise of God's grace includes little

children, we baptize infants, who become members of Christ's believing church through baptism. These children need to come to know that they are sinners with a sinful nature that opposes God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they need to confess their sinfulness and yield to God; and possess for themselves forgiveness of their sin through Jesus Christ, as they are led from the faith received in infant baptism into a clear conscious personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Saviour and being assured of salvation, rely solely on the finished work of Christ, and the power of the Gospel to live as children of God. In the Sacrament of Baptism, God offers the benefits of Christ's redemption to all people and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration of newness of life to all who believe. God calls the baptized person to live in daily repentance, that is, in sorrow for sin, in turning from sin, and in personal faith in the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ.

Holy Communion

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ gives to the communicants His body and blood given for the forgiveness of sins in, with, and under the bread and wine. In it He declares the state of grace and holy nature of the redeemed in Christ and in so strengthens our faith. The Lord's Supper offers the truly present body and blood of Christ, imparts power for Christian living, is an act of thankful adoration and is a celebration of Christian fellowship. The Lord's Supper is open to those who are baptised into Christ, who have received suitable teaching on the person of God, the church as an expression of the kingdom of God and understand the true nature of the Lord's Supper. In accordance with 1 Cor 11:27 – 29 we also teach that each communicant is to examine themselves before coming so that they may not bring judgement on themselves by eating and drinking in an unworthy manner.

Affirmation of Faith

For those baptised as infants there will be a formal course of study of the bible, the kingdom of God and personal faith and the opportunity to make a public confession of faith and take personal responsibility for their faith.

The Church

Church

The Church Universal consists of all those who believe on Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The local congregation is an assembly of believers in a certain locality among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the sacraments are rightly administered.

Office of Pastor

The office of pastor is to be filled by men only in accordance with the biblical principle of male responsibility for leadership of family and community.

Pastors must adhere to a Lutheran confession of faith, be suitably trained for ministry and be recognised as meeting the biblical standards outlined in the first letter to Timothy Chapter 3.

Elders

Elders are to be men of 30 years and older who are mature in the faith, have been an example of biblical living before the congregation and are able to provide leadership for the congregation GROWTH team.

Elders will undergo a period of training under the pastor and sign a declaration of biblical practice.

Leadership in Congregation

GROWTH portfolio leaders must be members 18 y/o and over and may be male or female and work under the authority of the congregational pastor

Ministry of Women

Under the responsibility of a pastor, women, like men, may serve in the church in any manner in which they are gifted and led by the Holy Spirit.

Marriage

Marriage is only recognised as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

Section 2 – Principles of Government

Church Governance

One Faith, One church, many congregations. We practice a unified form of church government, guided by a Council, made up of pastors and elders of each local congregation, through a centralised administration. The Council will meet fortnightly.

Congregation

Each congregation will be led by pastors, elders and leaders of the GROWTH portfolios who will meet fortnightly offset to the Council meeting. There will be a life co-ordinator who will be a point of contact for the administration team.

The Council

The role of the council is to hold one another, the church, the congregations and members to biblical truth. to oversee the growth of the church. And delegate authority to the administration team as appropriate.

Church Administration

The administration team will operate under the direction of the council and will have no authority other than that which the council determines. For the purpose of incorporation these positions will fill the equivalency of chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer. They will liaise with the congregational life co-ordinator.

Church Finances

A centralised financial system maintained by an administration team directed by the council. While local resources shall normally be recorded against the local congregation the principal of need will also be practised, and funds allocated where required, ensuring continuity of ministry across the whole church in each setting and potential for new congregations.

Church Membership

Church membership is available to all adults 18 and older who are active participants in a congregation of the church. Membership will be reconfirmed each year through the membership covenant. Those below 18 y/o and baptised will have membership under their parents

Church Participation

Participation in the life of the congregations is open to all.

Church Leadership and the Right to Vote

Church leadership will be restricted to those 18 y/o and over holding membership.

Appointing Pastors

Pastors are called by the church and endorsed by the council. Pastors need to demonstrate the qualities listed in scripture.

These men will need to hold as a minimum a Certificate IV in Ministry and then commit to study in Lutheran distinctives for one year under the supervision of the council and begin a Bachelor of Ministry within 2 years if not held.

Elders

Elders are men put forward by the congregation and appointed by pastors. Elders need to demonstrate the qualities listed in scripture.

Missionaries/Specialised Evangelists

Men and women may serve as missionaries / evangelists and must be suitably trained for the activities undertaken and called by the church. A pastor of the church will provide a mentoring relationship for them.

Ministries

All ministries must be led by a member of one of the congregations of the church. A pastor of the church will provide a mentoring relationship for them.