



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PRAYER
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Our Mission Statement
Lutheran Church of Prayer walks with others and teaches the
Word of God through relationships and personal example.

Welcome Friends & Guests!

We pray you will be blessed by our worship today. A welcome packet can be found at the Welcome Center Desk in our lobby. Please pick one up. Each family is asked to fill out an attendance card. Place the completed card in the offering plate. If you have a prayer request to be included in the service, please write your requests on the blue Prayer Requests sheet found in the pew rack and hand it directly to an Usher before worship begins.

A Time for Quiet Meditation

As you enter the sanctuary for worship you are encouraged to use this time for prayer and meditation to prepare your hearts to worship our Lord and to look over the worship bulletin. Visiting with friends can be done in the narthex area so others will not be disturbed. Thank you.

Offering

The offering is an act of worship for members and friends of Lutheran Church of Prayer, moved by God's love, to support the mission of the church. We do not want guests to feel obligated to participate. We want you to feel welcome and we truly wish to serve you! God bless you!

Standing

If at any time during the service it becomes uncomfortable for you to stand, please feel free to sit down, even if others are standing. God knows our strengths and understands our weaknesses too.

Organist, David Collins • Choir Director, David Ortiz
Pianist, David Collins • Handbell Director, Judy Houston
Praise Band Director, Tammy Poynor

Serving Us Today

Pastor Pastor Dwayne Hendricks
Elder..... Don Votaw & Bryant Arnold
Ushers..... Frank Cressy & Roy Eynaud
Reader Angela Madding
Greeters Betty Jordin & Carolyn Schaefer
Altar Circle Barb Kraley & Linda Hartnett

As We Gather

It is still Advent, but today we hear an account of the Christmas story early so that we may know what to look for later this week. The Son of Mary by the Holy Spirit is Jesus, who saves us from our sins and who fulfills the promise of Immanuel: God is with us. Perhaps the richness of the details of Luke's account sometimes distracts us from the message. The Lord has come to keep His Word, to save us from our sins, and to keep us in His hand so that we may be His eternally. None of this was obvious to either Mary or faithful Joseph, and yet the Lord was at work through it all to deliver to us His Son to be our Savior. We will still worry when things do not go as we plan, and we will still struggle with doubts and fears, but the angel of God's presence is no mere messenger sent in His place. No, the angel of God's presence is His only-begotten Son, whose name is Jesus and whose work is our salvation.

Confession and Absolution

Call to Worship

Chimes

Prelude:

"Regent Square"

Arr. by Tim Shewmaker

Welcome

Hymn of Invocation: 370 What Child Is This

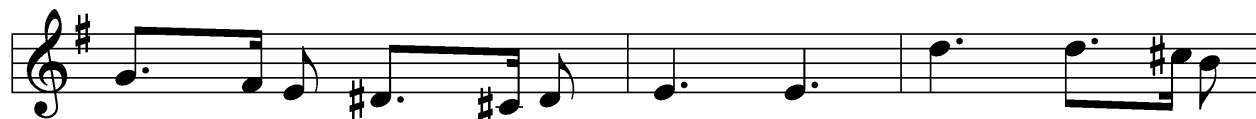
V 1-3



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are
3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While
feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98

Tune: English, 16th cent.

Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Confession and Absolution

P O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,

C and with Him is plentiful redemption.

Silence for self-examination.

P Holy and gracious God,

C I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

Service of the Word

Introit

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the
morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is
steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence.

Kyrie

LSB 152

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.

- A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



- A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



- A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.



- A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



Salutation and Collect of the Day: Advent 4

- P** The Lord be with you.



P Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 7:10–17

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm:

Psalm 24; antiphon: v. 7

¹The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,

²for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

⁸Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!

⁹Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

Epistle:

Romans 1:1–7

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised
beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
³concerning his Son, who was descended from David
according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be the Son of
God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his
resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,
⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship
to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his
name among all the nations, ⁶including you who are
called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called
to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Special Music:

“Will We Know Him”

Words by Don Besig & Nancy Price

Music by Don Besig

Alleluia and Verse

LSB 156



Holy Gospel:

Matthew 1:18–25

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.



¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;

**who for us men and for our salvation came
down from heaven**

**and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the
virgin Mary**

and was made man;

**and was crucified also for us under Pontius
Pilate.**

He suffered and was buried.

**And the third day He rose again according to
the Scriptures**

and ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

**And He will come again with glory to judge
both the living and the dead,**

whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

**who with the Father and the Son together is
worshiped and glorified,**

who spoke by the prophets.

**And I believe in one holy Christian and
apostolic Church,**

**I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of
sins,**

and I look for the resurrection of the dead

and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: 374 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child *V*

1-3



1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;
2 An - gels sang a - bout His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;
3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;



There He lay, the Un - de - filed, To the world a strang - er.
Heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth Glo - ry all a - round Him.
He is still the Un - de - filed But no more a strang - er.



Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav - ior?
Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, Heard the an - gels sing - ing;
Son of God of hum - ble birth, Beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;



Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa - vor.
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring - ing.
Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glo - ry!

Text: Joseph Simpson Cook, 1859–1933

Tune: Piae Cantiones Ecclesiasticae, 1582, Griefswald

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon: “The Mark of God” *Romans 1*

Offering:

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

By Gustaw Hoist

Arr. by John M. Rasley

Offertory

LSB 159



 What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all His ben - e - fits to

me? I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing and will
call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal -
va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my
vows to the Lord now in the pres - ence of all His peo - ple, in the
courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

Prayer of the Church

P O God, You have kept Your Word and delivered to us Your own Son by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin. Guide us so that we may rejoice in the Word made flesh and in the redemption He has won by His holy life, life-giving death and resurrection. Bless all pastors, that they may faithfully preach and teach this Gospel. Open the hearts of young men to hear and heed Your call to the ministry. Bless all church workers in their various vocations, that they may serve us well in Your name. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Holy Lord, You promised the virgin-born Son to reluctant King Ahaz, and in the fullness of time the Word became flesh. Open our hearts and strengthen our faith gladly to receive Your Son in the signs where He is present: not in signs of our own choosing, but in the Holy Word and Sacraments. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Heavenly Father, You raised up Joseph, a man honorable and just, to be the guardian and earthly father to Your Son. Give all earthly fathers wisdom, patience, pride of duty and, above all, faith and loyalty to Your Word, that knowing Your true Guardianship, they may head their households with godly forbearance. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, You do not bear with the tiresome flattery and unbelief of kings and rulers forever. Have mercy on us, Lord, and spare our nation. Clear away all empty shows of piety and renew genuine faith in the Virgin's Son, that His coming at the last may not be a sign against us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P You are the giver of every good gift, O Lord, and You care for us in all our needs of body, mind and spirit. Give healing to the sick, relief to the suffering, peace to the

dying and comfort to those who mourn [*especially*
and those we name in our hearts].

According to Your gracious will, sustain them all by Your grace, and give them patience and courage as they await the unfolding of Your healing grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Grant, Holy Father, that all who eat today of this feast of joy may find in the Savior's body and blood a blessed foretaste of the feast to come, for the strengthening of their faith and the growth of their love. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord God, heavenly Father, we give You thanks for Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the Dayspring from on high and the splendor of light everlasting. By His coming in the flesh and by His blessed Word, enlighten our hearts with the Gospel, enlighten the hearts of those who sit in the darkness of unbelief with the light of saving faith, and enlighten those who dwell in the shadow of death with the certain hope of the resurrection through Him. Grant that, as we recall with thanksgiving His advent in the flesh, we may always confess Him and remain watchful for His advent in glory at the Last Day; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who

lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever.

C Amen.

Service of the Sacrament

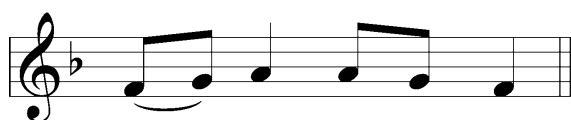
Our Belief Concerning the Lord's Supper
(Communion Confession spoken together)

C In celebrating the Lord's Supper we recognize the Biblical teaching that this is not merely a representation of Christ, but the real presence of His Body, and His Blood in the bread and the wine. We also recognize that in the Supper we receive forgiveness of sins, strength and unity with fellow confessing and communing Christians.

Preface

LSB 160

P The Lord be with you.



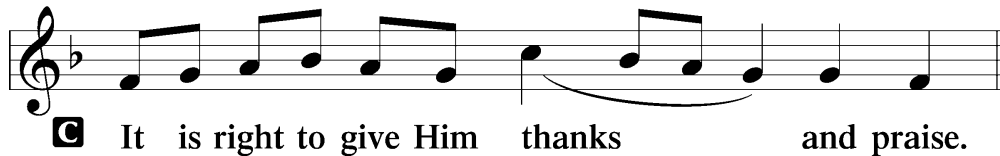
C And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

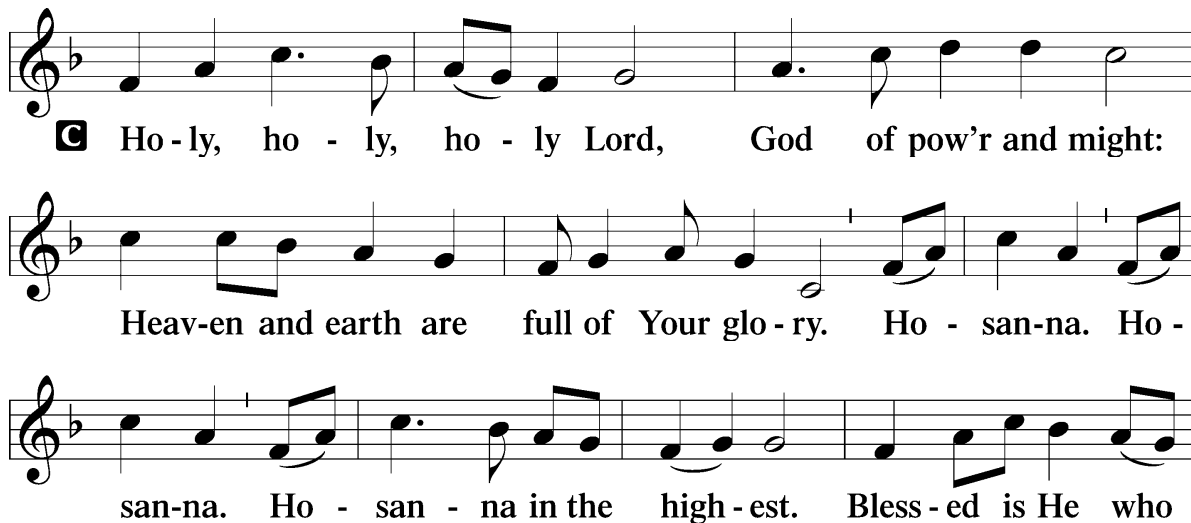


Proper Preface

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

LSB 161





Prayer of Thanksgiving

LSB 161

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✝ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✝ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Lord's Prayer

**C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Pax Domini

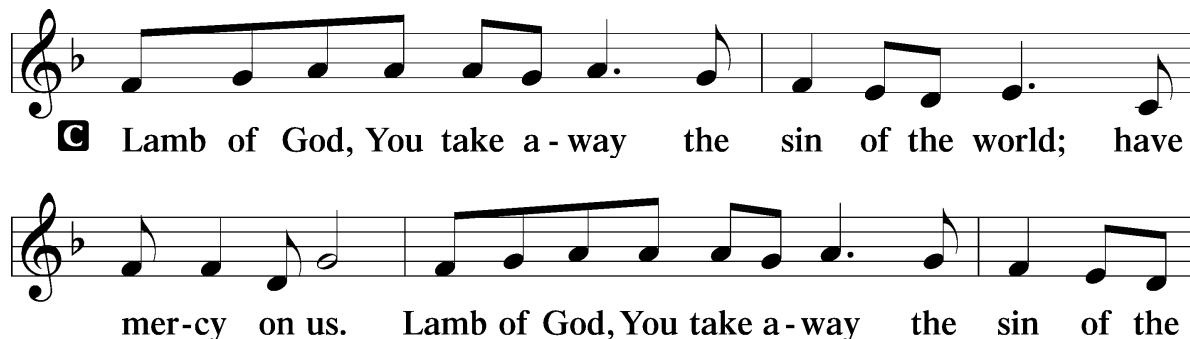
LSB 163

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.



Agnus Dei

LSB 163



world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Choir Anthem: “I Shall Know Him When He Comes”

By Douglas E. Wagner

Distribution

Thank the Lord

LSB 164

Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.
Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear His name.
He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy
with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Benediction

LSB 166

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.



Announcements

Hymn to Depart: 364 Away in a Manger

V 1-3



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

The stars in the sky _____ looked down where He lay,
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

Text (sts. 1-2): Little Children's Book, 1885, Philadelphia; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, 1892, Louisville, alt.

Tune: James R. Murray, 1841-1905

Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting One from Lutheran Service Book

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+ What We Believe +

God: is Triune, Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Three Persons, One Essence. He is the only true God: *Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 8:4*

Jesus: is true God, equal to the Father and Holy Spirit, the only Savior of mankind. *John 5:23; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 20:28*

Sin: all mankind is wicked; by nature the human race is spiritually blind, dead, broken in heart/mind, and in need of restoration with God and each other. God's wrath abides on all. *Genesis 8:21; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23, 7:15, 18; Mark 7:20-23; John 3:36.*

Justification: Sin and God's wrath against it has been dealt with by God through the death of God the Son on the cross. All have salvation through the blood of Jesus where our Father no longer holds our wickedness and sin against us but declares us righteous. We have peace again with God through faith in Jesus. This good news gives believers hope, peace, joy, and love to live as Christians. *Romans 5:1-10; John 3:16, 36; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 2:1-2; Corinthians 5:18-21.*

Conversion: to faith in the Savior is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (spoken, written, and sacramental). In the message of the cross God gathers His family. *Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23; John 3:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:3.*

Holy Baptism: is a gracious work of the Holy Spirit Who creates faith, washes away sins, and connects us to Jesus and His body the church. *John 3:5-6; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13.*

The Holy Spirit's Work: Converted through faith in Jesus our human nature still threatens our unity with God and each other. Reconciliation, that is repentance and faith, is the daily rhythm of believers. Guilt and sorrow are promptings of the Holy Spirit for us to speak with God confessing thoughts, words, and actions asking Him for forgiveness in Jesus' name. *Ephesians 4:30-32; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 10:19-25.*

The Lord's Supper: or Holy Communion is Christ's True Body and Blood, where He is really present in the bread and wine to assure us of forgiveness. We gather to receive Jesus often because we daily sin much and are in constant need of His power to live the Christian life of faith, hope, and love/charity. *John 6:53-59; 15:5; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16.*

Scripture: is inspired by God, without error and is our solid guide to life. *John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16.*

Creation: happened according to Genesis 1-2. Evolution is unscriptural, unscientific, and unnecessary. *Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6.*

2nd Coming: of Jesus will be sudden/unexpected. *2 Peter 3:10; Mark 13:32; Matthew 24.* We are living in the New Testament era where we rule with Jesus in the activity of sharing His message of love. *1 Corinthians 15:23-26; Ephesians 2:1-7; Matthew 28:19-20; Revelation 20:4-6*