

HOSANNA'S MISSION AND WHAT WE TEACH

“Advancing God’s Kingdom everywhere, one person at a time”

Hosanna! Mission Statement

1) THE BIBLE. We teach that the Holy Bible is inspired by God and is without error in its original manuscripts. It speaks God’s Word to us as our final authority in matters of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 4:4, 2 Peter 1:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Revelation 22:18-19, John 17:17, 20:31). The Bible is not just ancient literature, but rather a living book, which Christ opens to us (Luke 24:45).

2) GOD. We teach that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 44:6, Ephesians 4:4-6) eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We call this “the Trinity” (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, II Corinthians 13:13).

3) JESUS CHRIST. We teach that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human, who by his virgin birth (Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:31,35); sinless life (Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22); miracles; death on the cross; and bodily resurrection is our Lord and has redeemed us (Romans 5:8). We teach his ascension into heaven (Acts 1) and his imminent return (Revelation 22:20) to earth in power and glory. (1 Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 9:6, Colossians 1:15-20).

4) THE HOLY SPIRIT. We teach that the Holy Spirit, true God, makes faith possible (John 14:26, Acts 11:16-17, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Romans 8:14-17) and dwells in each believer (Romans 8:1-17, 1 Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit’s natural and supernatural gifts are available and operative today for all Christians (Acts 2, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28-31, 14:1-12, Ephesians 4:11-13, Hebrews 2:4) and we encourage their use (1 Thessalonians 5:19). All gifts are to be used with reverence and humbleness, and none of them is to be used as a “test” for true faith. We teach that service and leadership in our congregation are based on giftedness by the Holy Spirit, and not on the arbitrary differences of race, gender, age, or social and economic power (Galatians 3:28, Joel 2:28-29, Ephesians 3:4-6).

5) HUMAN NATURE. We teach that human nature contains selfishness, lack of faith, and sin, which are not removable by human means (Romans 3:23). The consequence of this fact is eternal death (Romans 6:23).

6) SALVATION. We teach that Christ alone (Acts 4:12, John 14:6), by His death on the cross and resurrection, provides salvation from sin, death and the power of the devil. This salvation is a gift; it is free and cannot be earned. We call this grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Because of this grace, we teach that one can be certain of eternal life (“assurance” – John 5:24) and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43). We teach that we partake of this free gift of grace by faith alone (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). We call this “justification.” It happens once and for all as the believer receives Christ into his or her heart and is reborn/ regenerated (Romans 3:3, 10:9-10, Revelation 3:20, John 3:1ff) by water and the Spirit (John 3:5).

7) CHANGED LIFE. We believe that becoming a Christian leads to a changed life (2 Corinthians 5:17). We call this change “sanctification,” which is a life-long process of growth in selfless love, humbleness, service, stewardship, and holiness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Change and growth are not optional for those saved by grace (James 2:17, Romans 12:2). Because a good tree bears good fruit (Matthew 7:17-18), people justified by grace through faith act on that faith and will change and grow in Christ (2 Peter 3:18, James 1:22, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17, Ephesians 4:22-24).

8) THE CHURCH. We teach that we are a part of the one true Apostolic Church (Ephesians 3:4-6, Romans 12:5) that is made up of all those of every time and every place who have believed in Christ as Lord and teach the teachings of the Apostles as recorded in the New Testament. The outward marks of this universal Church are the faithful preaching of the Gospel and obedience, in good faith, to Christ’s commands to baptize in the name of the Trinity and to provide for the Lord’s Supper. We extend the hand of fellowship to all members of this universal Christian Church (Romans 15:7). All such are welcome at the Lord’s Supper at Hosanna! Instruction for the Lord’s Supper is provided for all people grade 4 and up.

9) PRAYER. We at Hosanna! are people of prayer. We teach that God commands us to pray and promises to hear us (James 5:16, Matthew 18:18-20). We teach that God communicates His power and presence to believers through prayer (Revelation 3:20-22). We teach that God answers prayer and we encourage everyone to grow in prayer (Ephesians 3:20-21). We believe that God still works miracles in answer to prayer (Luke 20:38).

10) BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER. We teach that Jesus instituted Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They are two ways, along with his Word, that he pours his grace out for us. Lutherans and some other churches have called them *sacraments*. Other faithful churches have called them *ordinances*. We baptize believers (Acts 8:26-39) and the children of believers (Acts 16:15, 1 Corinthians 1:16, Joshua 24:15, Luke 18:16). We teach that it is imperative for children who are baptized to come, in the Lord’s time, to a personal saving faith in Christ (Hebrews 10:39, John 3:16, Romans 10:9) for the promises of baptism (Romans 6:3-4, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21) to be effective. We accept the baptisms of those who come to us from other congregations and denominations as valid, provided that they were performed with water in the name of the Trinity (Matthew 28:19). We do not teach that unbaptized children who die are lost for eternity. We teach that Christ is truly present in the bread (Matthew 26:27) and the wine/juice (Matthew 26:28) during the Lord’s Supper. For the promises associated with Communion to be effective, these elements must be received in faith (1 Corinthians 11:29). Based on the Lutheran teaching of the “priesthood of all believers” (1 Peter 2:9), the Vision Board reserves the right to grant permission to any trained person to distribute the Lord’s Supper. In summary, we teach that God acts in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but that our faith is not an optional part of the equation.

11) OUR LUTHERAN HERITAGE AND IDENTITY. We teach that the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as well as the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism are faithful witnesses to the Gospel. We identify with the confessing movement begun in the Lutheran Reformation. We teach the Lutheran themes of grace through faith alone (apart from “earning” salvation), scripture alone (scripture has the prominence over tradition and human reason), and Christ alone (there is no other path to salvation). Accepting that Lutheranism is a broad global movement, we are not responsible for what other Lutherans teach that may conflict with our teachings at Hosanna! We affirm that Christ alone is the head of the church (Ephesians 4:15-16) and thereby affirm a congregational polity and do not recognize the authority of other organizations or partnerships to have jurisdiction over our teaching.

12) THE LAST THINGS. We teach that Christ will return soon in power to judge the living and the dead (Revelation 22:20, Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:31). We teach eternal salvation for the Church in heaven (John 14:3, John 3:16) and eternal punishment in hell for those who reject Christ (Luke 12:9, John 5:29). We teach that those who die in faith are immediately, in spirit, in the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 5:8). On Resurrection Day, all the faithful together will receive glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-55, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

13) HEALING. We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ touches the whole person – forgiveness for the spirit, freedom for the soul, and healing for the body – and comes to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 4:16, Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:16-17, 1 John 3:8, Luke 9:56-NKJV, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Philippians 1:6 AMP).

WHAT WE TEACH Continued...

14) OUR TEACHING ON CURRENT ISSUES. We, as Protestants, do not teach that we can bind the conscience of the individual believer. However, the Bible calls us to give a clear teaching, even if unpopular, on current issues. What is actually believed is up to the heart of each individual Christian as the Holy Spirit is at work in him or her.

- We teach that a full sexual relationship belongs within the boundaries of a publicly committed marriage between one man and one woman (*Genesis 2:24, Exodus 20:14, Romans 1:26-27, Ephesians 5:31*).
- We teach the sanctity and defense of all human life including the unborn (*Deuteronomy 30:19, Psalm 139:13-19, Jeremiah 1:5, Proverbs 31:8*).
- We teach that we are to be proactive in peacemaking and the prevention of violence (*Ephesians 2:14, Matthew 5:9*).
- We teach that Christians are to work actively to break down the barriers that divide people; especially those of race, economics, and gender (*Acts 10:34-35, Galatians 3:28*). We do not believe that these distinctions will matter in heaven (*Revelation 7:9*) and teach that the church on earth should begin to mirror and strive for this eventual reality (*Matthew 6:10, James 1:22*).

15) OPTIONAL MATTERS. We teach that the Bible is non-conclusive on the following issues and that they are a matter of human conscience:

- We do not teach that the Bible gives a clear teaching on specific age for the baptismal candidate and amount of water for baptism.
- We encourage a sense of readiness and a zeal for the return of Christ, but leave view on the exact sequence and complexity/simplicity of the last things up to the individual believer.
- We do not teach that the Bible gives a clear teaching on whether or not salvation can be lost.
- Because of the breadth of human experience of God, we do not teach a narrow doctrine on how one must experience the relationship between being "born again" and the "infilling/baptism of the Holy Spirit."
- Some feel that faith calls for abstinence from alcohol. Others model a responsible, moderate use of alcohol.
- We do not teach that the Bible gives a clear teaching on how "predestination" works or whether it exists in human terms at all. We avoid controversies on this topic; especially those related to salvation.
- We do not teach that extra-biblical customs and teachings of human origin ought to be decisive.

16) CONCLUSION: TEACHING AT HOSANNA! We, the Hosanna! Vision Board, are responsible for "what gets taught" at Hosanna! and encourage all who teach, whether from the pulpit, in classes and small groups, or among children and young people, to respect our boundaries, identity, and integrity as a congregation by refraining from teaching in direct contradiction to the above affirmations **when speaking for the Church**. Those with serious objections to parts of this document are encouraged to bring them up with us, the Lord may be speaking through you! We also encourage all guest speakers to be familiar with these affirmations and to respect us as we respect you.

Approved by the Hosanna! Vision Board as a continuing resolution. June 1996 version, as added and renumbered November 2012.

I have read this Hosanna! Lutheran Church Mission and What We Teach Statement and agree not to teach or encourage thoughts or behaviors contrary to it and hereby accept and agree to uphold and practice, on a daily basis, "Hosanna's Mission and What We Teach."

Signature:

Date: