

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

THE BIBLE – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

GOD – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

MAN – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

SIN – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

REDEMPTION – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

FAITH – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

THE CHURCH – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

SACRAMENTS – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper communicants receive in, with and under the bread and wine also Christ’s body and blood. Communicants believing this word of promise receive this for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

RESURRECTION – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

INTROIT

Psalm 80:1, 8a, 9b, 7; Antiphon: Psalm 80:3

Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;

it took deep root and filled the land.

Restore us, O God of hosts;

let your face shine, that we may be saved!

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.

Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved!

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

G **Amen**

GRADUAL

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you,

righteous and having salvation.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

G **hear our prayer.**

Isaiah 40:1–11 (ESV)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news;

lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news;

lift it up, fear not;

say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,

and his arm rules for him;

behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms;

he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

2 Peter 3:8–14 (ESV)

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be

found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Mark 1:1–8 (ESV)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

⁷ And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Isaiah 40:1–11

2 Peter 3:8–14

Mark 1:1–8

You Are Prepared through Repentance for the Coming of the Lord

“*The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*” (Mark 1:1) begins when John the Baptist appears and comes “*proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*” (Mark 1:4). As the Prophet Isaiah had written, John is the messenger of the Lord, sent before His face to prepare His way. To this day, the ministry of the Forerunner continues in the preaching of the Law and the Gospel, and in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. By these ways and means “*the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together*” (Is. 40:5), and the Good Shepherd “*will gather the lambs in His arms*” (Is. 40:11). He speaks “*tenderly to Jerusalem,*” and He comforts His people by pardoning their iniquity (Is. 40:1–2). What is more, He promises “*new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*” (2 Pet. 3:13). Repent, therefore, and humble yourself as you wait for His coming in peace (2 Pet. 3:14), because He “*is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:

December 17: Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 (v.5); 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28