

## 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 85:8-9, 12-13; Antiphon: Psalm 85:7*

*Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.*

*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.*

*Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*Yes, the LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.*

*Righteousness will go before him  
and make his footsteps a way.*

**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.**

*Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.*

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P** *O Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayer and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**C** **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,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

### **Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (ESV)**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the  
brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those  
who are bound;  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's  
favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in  
Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of  
mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a faint  
spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of  
righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may  
be glorified.  
<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former  
devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.  
<sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their  
recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting  
covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup> Their offspring shall be known  
among the nations,  
and their descendants in the midst of  
the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
them,  
that they are an offspring the LORD has  
blessed.

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
my soul shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the  
garments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of  
righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself like a  
priest with a beautiful headdress,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her  
jewels.  
<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its  
sprouts,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in  
it to sprout up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause  
righteousness and praise  
to sprout up before all the nations.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without  
ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all  
circumstances; for this is the will of  
God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup> Do not  
quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise  
prophecies, <sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold  
fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from  
every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace  
himself sanctify you completely, and  
may your whole spirit and soul and  
body be kept blameless at the coming  
of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who  
calls you is faithful; he will surely do  
it.

### **John 1:6-8, 19-28 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God,  
whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a  
witness, to bear witness about the  
light, that all might believe through  
him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to  
bear witness about the light.

<sup>19</sup> And this is the testimony of John,  
when the Jews sent priests and Levites  
from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are

you?”<sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”<sup>21</sup> And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”<sup>22</sup> So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”<sup>23</sup> He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

<sup>24</sup> (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)<sup>25</sup> They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”<sup>26</sup> John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know,<sup>27</sup> even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”<sup>28</sup> These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

### THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

John 1:6–8, 19–28

#### ***The Coming of the Christ Brings True Rejoicing in His Forgiveness***

When he preaches repentance, John the Baptist points us to Christ Jesus. John was sent by God “*as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him*” (John 1:7). He baptizes with water in order to “*make straight the way of the Lord,*” who shall redeem His people from their sins (John 1:23). That Lord Jesus “*who comes after*” John now stands among us and makes Himself known to us (John 1:26–27). He has been anointed by the Holy Spirit “*to bring good news to the poor*” and “*to bind up the brokenhearted*” (Is. 61:1). By the washing of the water with His Word and Spirit, He clothes His Church with “*the garments of salvation*” and adorns her with His own righteousness “*as a bride adorns herself with her jewels*” (Is. 61:10). Therefore, we “*rejoice always*” in the Lord, “*pray without ceasing,*” and “*give thanks in all circumstances*” (1 Thess. 5:16–18). For “*the God of peace,*” who has called you by the Gospel, will surely “*sanctify you completely,*” so that “*your whole spirit and soul and body*” will “*be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thess. 5:23–24).

#### ***Next Week's Readings from God's Word:***

December 24: Fourth Sunday in Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-5(19-29) (v.8);

Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38