

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).

First Sunday after Epiphany

January 7, 2024

INTROIT

Psalm 2:7-11, 12c; Antiphon: Isaiah 42:1a

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights
I will tell of the decree:*

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

*Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.*

*You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*

*Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.*

*Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.*

*for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessèd are all who take refuge in him.*

**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.**

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

G **Amen**

GRADUAL

Psalm 117:1-2a; Psalm 96:8

Praise the LORD, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

*For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.*

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!*

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy,* **G** **hear our prayer.**

Genesis 1:1-5 (ESV)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Romans 6:1-11 (ESV)

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ,

we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Mark 1:4-11 (ESV)

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And 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. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And 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. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD (The First Sunday after the Epiphany)

Genesis 1:1–5

Romans 6:1–11

Mark 1:4–11

In Holy Baptism, the Holy Triune God Reveals Himself and Recreates Us in His Image

“*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*” (Gen. 1:1). Then, as “*the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*” (Gen. 1:2), God spoke His Word: “*‘Let there be light,’ and there was light*” (Gen. 1:3). In the same way “*the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*” (Mark 1:1) brings about the New Creation through the waters of Baptism by the same Word and Spirit of God. When John the Baptist came, “*proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,*” Jesus also came “*and was baptized by John in the Jordan*” (Mark 1:4, 9). Although He had no sins of His own, He took His stand with sinners in His Baptism and took the sins and mortality of the world upon Himself. He was baptized into His own death, by which the heavens are opened and the Spirit is given to us. God the Father is well-pleased with His beloved Son and raises Him from the dead. As we share His Baptism and are “*united with Him in a death like His*” (Rom. 6:5), we also share His resurrection unto “*newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4).

Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:

January 14: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-10 (v.14);

1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51