



What We Believe

Having a common purpose and seeking one goal, we join together as free congregations for Christian fellowship, mutual edification, the salvation of souls, and whatever work may be necessary that the Kingdom of God may come among us and our fellow men. No bonds of compulsion bind us, save those which the Holy Spirit lays upon us.

No man fully understands the times and the situations in which he lives. At best we see through a glass darkly. Nevertheless, each Christian must decide in the light of God's Word and the evidence which he has what course of action he should take and to what causes his life should be given. It is the same for the Christian congregations. Imperfect as it is, it must decide in what fellowship of other congregations it can best live out its purpose for being. Out of considerable soul-searching and prayer we have chosen to continue as Lutheran free churches.

As we stand at this particular moment of time, we give thanks for the heritage of the past. We recognize and confess our indebtedness to many noble souls of the faith, both the relatively unknown who are faithful in their places and the ones on whom God placed the mantle of leadership. Even as it is true that before the Cross of Christ there are no self-made men, so it is true that we have shared in blessings from many and are debtors.

It seems good to us as we join together for common work and fellowship to state our beliefs in regard to the following matters.

I. Doctrine

- We accept and believe in the Holy Bible as the complete written Word of God, preserved to us by the Holy Spirit for our salvation and instruction.
- We endorse the statement on the Word as found in the United Testimony on Faith and Life and would quote here the following: "We bear witness that the Bible is our only authentic and infallible source of God's revelation to us and all men, and that it is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of Christian doctrine and life. We hold that the Bible, as a whole and in all its parts, is the Word of God under all circumstances regardless of man's attitude toward it."
- We accept the ancient ecumenical symbols, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds; Luther's Small Catechism and the unaltered Augsburg Confession as the true expression of the Christian faith and life.
- We reject any affiliations or associations which do not accept the Bible alone as definitive for the life and practice of man and the church.
- We submit all religious teaching to the test of II John 7-11.
- We endorse no one version or revision of the Bible to the exclusion of others. We recommend all which are reverent and true translations.

II. Christian Unity

- He who believes in and accepts the sufficient work of Jesus for his salvation and is baptized, is a child of God.
- The Christian is united by the strongest bonds to those who share this faith with him whether they come from his own denomination or another.
- We believe that Jesus, in His High Priestly Prayer, prayed that those who believe in Him might find and accept each other.
- In some situations it is possible that unions of groups of congregations may be desirable.
- We recommend that our congregations cooperate wherever possible with like-minded Lutheran congregations and movements in programs of evangelism and witness.
- We envision opportunities for our congregations to cooperate with the Protestant churches in the areas of evangelism and witness to their communities. However, care must be taken not to compromise the Lutheran understanding of the Scriptures.



III. Church Polity

- We believe that final human authority in the churches is vested in the local congregations, subject to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
- Scripture does not command or forbid any particular organization for fellowship of congregations. In the absence of this, we believe it is most safe to operate in a democratic way.
- Conferences of the congregations of our fellowship do not enact law for the congregations, but simply recommend actions and practices to them.
- In a free association of congregations such as this, neither its officers or conferences can negotiate the union of any or all of the congregations with another fellowship of congregations. This is an individual matter of the congregation.
- We accept the Guiding Principles of the Lutheran Free Church as a true statement of our belief in regard to church polity.
- The Holy Christian Church consists of those who in their hearts truly believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- A free congregation selects and calls its own pastors, conducts its own program of worship, fellowship and service and owns and maintains its own property.

IV. Practical Life

- The Christian seeks to refrain from those acts, thoughts, and words which are against a stated law of God.
- Where actions and practices are neither forbidden nor encouraged in Scripture by name, the earnest believer will search in the Scriptures for principles to guide his decisions and conduct.
- He is aware that there is a separation which is necessary between the Christian and the world.
- Ultimately every Christian makes his own decisions as to life and practice in the presence of his God. But he welcomes the sincere counsel of fellow believers.
- Every Christian is responsible for the witness of his life to others and will govern himself, with the Lord's help, accordingly.
- The Christian will refrain from belonging to organizations which practice a religion without Christ as the only Savior. Belonging to such a group places the believer in a hopelessly compromised position and destroys his witness for Christ.

V. Church Life

- We make no recommendation as to the use of liturgy and vestments except that we encourage simplicity in worship.
- We believe the earliest Christians were extremely simple in their order of service. Whatever is added to the service carries the danger of becoming only form.
- Even the simple parts of the service may become only form.
- The preaching of the Word of God must be the central part of the service.
- True Gospel preaching endeavors to meet the needs of all who hear: the believer who desires to grow in his life with God, the seeking and uncertain souls who want to see Him, the hypocrite who must be awakened from his self-righteousness, and the hardened sinner who must still be called to saving faith.
- The Sacraments must always be met by the response of faith in the heart of the recipient to be efficacious.
- Hymn books should be such as will give honor to the Word of God and the Sacraments.
- Congregations will cherish opportunities for Bible study and prayer fellowship.
- The Lord has given talents and gifts to Christian lay people as well as pastors, and opportunity should be given for the practice of these gifts in the life of the congregations, also in meetings of fellowship outside the congregation, and in service to a needy world.