

What Do We Believe at Holy Cross Lutheran Church and Student Ministry?

In general, Lutheranism is a unique Christian theology which is Christ-centered, grace-oriented, and Scripture-based. It is unique because, while Evangelical and historically Protestant, it embraces the catholic heritage of worship, ancient creeds and doctrines, Sacraments, and traditional Christian ethics. We don't see our history beginning in 1517 when Luther nailed the 95 theses on the doors. We see our history beginning, along with the whole catholic Church, on the Day of Pentecost.

For the best summary of what we believe as a congregation in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, reference the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, or the Book of Concord.

Here is a generalized summary of our beliefs at Holy Cross Lutheran Church and Student Ministry:

1. We believe in God as He is confessed to be according to the Nicene Creed, confessing that He is One God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father has created all things. The Son is God in human flesh, Who came to redeem all things by His death, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand. The Holy Spirit makes us holy through the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Christian Church.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, that there is no other way to God but through Him, that by His incarnation (God's coming into human flesh and blood), death, resurrection, and ascension, He has paved the way for us also to join Him in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, so that we too may be where He is. This gift comes to us "extra nos," that is, outside of us. It is applied to us through the Word and Sacrament. It centers on God's grace in the forgiveness of sins. Through this grace, we are granted to follow Christ and be where He is.
3. We believe that the Holy Scriptures are true and without error. The Holy Scriptures are what happened when the Holy Spirit "spoke by the prophets" and what it means that the Church is "apostolic," for the New Testament is an apostolic document.
4. We believe that the Sacraments of Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and Holy Absolution have been ordained by Jesus Christ in the Holy Scriptures. Holy Baptism

is a promise "for you and your children" (Acts 2: 39), including infants (Matthew 19: 14, 28: 19). Holy Communion is truly Christ's Body and Blood (Matthew 26: 26; I Corinthians 10: 16) given for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26: 28). Holy Absolution is the authority given to men (Matthew 9: 1-8; John 20: 23), to forgive the sins of the repentant (Matthew 18: 18ff.) Communion is to be received "in both kinds" (chalice and host), and the wine used for communion should be fermented.

5. We believe that the Divine Service has been ordained by God. The Divine Service is the Liturgy (another word for service) which centers on the proper calling upon God's name (cf. Matthew 18: 20; Matthew 20: 30-31; I Corinthians 1: 2) and glorifying of His name (Psalm 86: 9), the proper preaching of the Word (repentance and forgiveness, cf. Luke 24: 47), and the proper administration of Holy Communion (cf. I Corinthians 11: 23-25).

6. We believe that the distinction between sacred and secular is based in Holy Scriptures. Proper worship calls for proper worship forms. There is such a thing as "sacred music" that should be used and "secular music" that should be avoided.

7. We hold to traditional Christian ethics, based in the Holy Scriptures, as have been held by the Church for almost two millennia. Abortion is the taking of human life and an abomination to the Lord. Marriage is to be honored as a sacred union instituted by God between a man and a woman. Pre-marital sex is fornication, a "work of the flesh" (Galatians 5: 19) to be avoided. Alcohol consumption is not forbidden, but drunkenness is.

8. We believe in the proper distinction of the two kingdoms, the "right hand kingdom" and the "left hand kingdom." The former is the kingdom of the Gospel, the Church, the Word and Sacraments. The latter is the kingdom of the Law, of the Government, of political leaders. We do not believe it is the mission of the Church to institute itself as the kingdom of God in this world, as a political body. It's voice in the world is prophetic, calling the governments of this world to repent of evil and conform to God's justice. It's job is not to make specifically Christian teachings the law of the land. We do not, for instance, believe that "love your enemy" is a good foreign policy against terrorist states, or that the communalistic example of the early apostolic church is prescriptive for governments of all ages.

**Being against abortion or gay marriage is not a "specifically Christian teaching." Most religions stand against these perversions, and a rationalistic argument can be

made, without appeal to Christian doctrine or Holy Scriptures, against either one.

9. We believe that Christ will return with clear signs, raise the dead, judge each individual, and then create a new heavens and a new earth. Those that were faithful to Him will live forever with Him; those that rejected Him will depart from Him into "everlasting fire." (Matthew 25: 41)