

## Summary of Faith

### St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Beatrice, NE

- **God** - We believe in the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons.
- **The Father** - The Father, in love, created the universe and all that exists, from nothing by His Word. In love He sustains His creation and desires a personal relationship with all people.
- **The Son** - Because of His love for us, Jesus was conceived of the Virgin Mary and born as a human being. Being fully divine and fully human, Jesus lived a perfect life, and in His sinless death on the cross Jesus suffered the punishment we deserve for our sin. Jesus was raised bodily from the dead on the third day. Only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can we receive the forgiveness of our sins and be made acceptable before God.
- **The Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of all believers and brings us to faith in Jesus Christ. Every Christian is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit who empowers us to be a witness of Jesus Christ to others, to walk in God's commands, and to do the work of the Church.
- **The Bible** - The Bible is the living Word of God, divinely inspired by God, without error, and therefore the only source of true teaching and final standard by which Christians are to live.
- **Sin** - Sin separates us from God. Sin is our rebellion against God and is what we do in thought, word, and deed, that is contrary to His will. Sin also includes those things we don't do as we ought. We are born sinful, are naturally self-centered, and therefore, in daily need of forgiveness.
- **Grace** - We are brought into a relationship with God, not by anything we do, but solely by what God has done for us. Knowing that we are sinners, we trust completely on God's grace, which is His unearned merit and favor toward us on account of Jesus Christ.
- **Faith** - Faith is a gift from God that enables us to know, trust in, and accept as true what the Bible says of God and rely in Him with firm confidence for our daily needs and our salvation.
- **Good Works** - We show forth love and mercy in our lives as a demonstration of God's love for us. We do this, not to win God's approval or salvation, but because we are thankful for the gift of eternal life, which we have received purely as a gift in Jesus Christ.
  
- **Holy Baptism** - The Bible teaches that in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, God gives us faith, forgiveness, and eternal life. We baptize infants, children, and adults in obedience to Christ's command, to forgive the sins of the person being baptized, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is given. God adopts us as His own children in Holy Baptism.
- **Holy Communion** - The Bible teaches that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Jesus is truly and really present in a miraculous way "in, with, and under" the bread and the wine. We participate in the Lord's Supper in obedience to Christ's command, to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, and to receive the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith.
- **Prayer** - Because Jesus Christ died for our sins; we have the privilege of praying directly to God. Prayer is our opportunity to thank and praise God, to seek His help in times of trouble and need, and to seek His way and will for our lives. Since prayer is a two-way communication in which we also listen to God, regular reading of the Bible is an integral part of daily prayer.
- **The Church** - The Church is not just the physical structure where we meet, or a social organization to which we belong. Rather, it consists of all those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Therefore, the Church is the body of believers in Christ throughout the world. God empowers members of the Church, gathered in congregations, with the spiritual gifts that are needed to serve Him and others.
- **The Return of Jesus** - Jesus Christ will visibly return on the Last Day, at the resurrection, at a time known only to God. He will come to judge the living and the dead and to fulfill His eternal promises.
- **The Last Day** - We believe that at the time of death the soul of the believer is at once received into the presence of Christ and that, at the Last Day, the believer will be raised to live with Christ, in body and soul, in eternal joy and glory.
- **Christian Witness** - We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.)