

Some Practical Aspects of Our Life Together in Christ

We gather weekly for worship

We have two services – a Saturday service at 5 pm, and a Sunday morning service at 10 am. The services are substantially the same, though Saturday night is a smaller and more intimate setting. Our practice is a blended service, which means that we sing both traditional hymns as well as contemporary songs. At one time, our goal was to offer a variety of services to allow many different expressions of the faith. These days, our goal is to build and strengthen our life together as a community living under the shadow of the cross in service to our world. For this reason, we conduct a single service on Sunday morning. Every service has as a central and primary focus to proclaim both Law and Gospel – to hear the hard truth that we are sinful and need God; and to hear and experience the blessed truth that we are also declared holy and sainted by God for the sake of his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the Gospel, which alone brings about healing and peace. During Lent and Advent we also conduct midweek services as part of our seasonal spiritual preparation. We offer many special services throughout the year to strengthen and deepen our life in Christ.

We gather weekly for learning

We set aside the hour before our Sunday service for children, youth and adults to grow in learning God's Word. During the school year, we offer midweek confirmation instruction as well. In the summers, we offer a week-long daytime Vacation Bible School (VBS). In addition, there are many Christ Care Small Groups as well as other bible studies during the week. Our goal is to be a family friendly community that seeks to strengthen all of us – young and old – in our journey together in Christ.

We steward the gifts of God for our mutual benefit and the benefit of others

We rely on the regular, proportionate giving of our members to carry on the work of ministry here and the task of missionary work elsewhere. When we give generously, as we are able, of our financial resources, our time, and the unique gifts each of us has been blessed with, we are all enriched. We are then able to carry out the work to which we have all been called. The most important gift we are given to steward is the Gospel of Christ.

A Few Other Important Aspects of Who We Are

We are ecumenical and inclusive

Unlike many LCMS congregations which limit the service of women, we welcome women to serve in every role of our community with the exception of the pastoral office. Women serve in elected leadership roles and assist in worship either as lay persons or as lay assistants commissioned by the Kansas District. We also cooperate with other congregations in service to our community, and when there is sound pastoral reason, we encourage and expect our pastor to be involved in caring for others not of this flock. We welcome all persons into our community, though like many communities of faith, we are basically a homogeneous people. We lament that we are not able to more fully realize the dream of a community from every nation, tribe, people and language (Revelation 7), and we pray, that with God's leading and caring, that we can one day move closer to fulfilling this dream.

We are a community that supports a nationally accredited preschool

Our congregation hosts a National Lutheran Schools Association (NLSA) accredited preschool. In this, we are a community that encourages and strengthens children and families. The director and staff have years of experience in early childhood education in a supportive, caring environment in which children learn through play. The core value of the team is expressed in the question they regularly ask, "What's best for the child?"

We are a community of "wounded healers"

We are – by God's grace and mercy – a family of wounded healers. We are persons who have borne our share of sorrow and pain, and who are using our experiences to care more deeply for the many in our world whom the Lord called, "the least of these." Our pastor is a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist with a counseling ministry to both our congregation and the larger community. Our goal as a congregation is to strengthen individuals, couples and families in Christ, and to restore to good health – as much as we are able – those individuals, relationships and families in which there is brokenness and pain.

Prince of Peace

Lutheran Church and Preschool, Missouri Synod

A STATEMENT ABOUT WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE BELIEVE, TEACH AND CONFESS



**Proclaim the Living Christ
Live the Peace of Christ**

What We Believe, Teach and Confess

We are all about Jesus!

The picture on the front cover by Rembrandt captures our focus. In the etching, we see people in various conditions of infirmity gathered around Jesus. The title of the work is, “Jesus Blesses the Children.” Yet all the persons depicted are adults. This highlights two things. First, we are all children of God through faith in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Second, our healing, health and wholeness are found in Christ. In him and through him, we find the forgiveness and peace that makes us new persons.

We are a Lutheran Congregation

As a Lutheran congregation, the Bible is our measure of all things spiritual. At the same time, our interpretation of the Bible is informed by the Lutheran Confessions, a collection of writings covering a range of theological issues prepared over a fifty year period (1530-1580). The centerpiece of the Lutheran Confessions is the Augsburg Confession. The heart of this confession is article IV, “justification.” It reads, “*It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions, but that we become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and for his sake our sin is forgiven, as St Paul taught in Romans 3 and 4.*” Justification means that God declares us holy and perfect for the sake of his Son, Jesus Christ. In other words, we are made right with God by our faith not by our works.

The Lutheran Distinctive

Lutherans are Protestant in substance and Catholic in form. This means that we emphasize the importance of faith in the life of the believer, as do all mainline Protestant traditions. We also believe, teach and confess that the Spirit of God delivers the gift of salvation in Christ through means of grace which we receive with faith. Consequently, we emphasize the importance of Word and sacrament as these are delivered in the liturgy of the church. Many Christians of different denominational backgrounds are comfortable here because of this blending of the two.

We are a congregation of

the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

In the United States there are two major Lutheran church bodies – the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and the LCMS. We both hold to the Lutheran Confessions for our identity, but we differ with respect to some matters of practice. Prince of Peace is self-governed, which is to say the property belongs to the congregation and the congregation maintains the right to call its pastor and other staff. At the same time, because we are part of a larger denomination, we voluntarily assent to its teaching and missionary emphasis. We join together in this emphasis of “mercy, mission, and life together.” For more information on the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, visit www.lcms.org.

Our life together as a community of faith is shaped by our mission, vision and core values

We express our mission statement with two succinct, juxtaposed statements: **Proclaim the Living Christ, Live the Peace of Christ.** We proclaim – that is, we preach, teach and share – that Jesus Christ was crucified for our sin, and on the third day, in fulfillment of God’s promise, he was raised from the dead, so that through faith in him, we have forgiveness, peace and life. With the apostle Paul, we preach Christ crucified. With the church apostolic, we preach a living Christ. We live – that is, we daily put into practice the faith which we confess with our words – the peace of Christ. This peace is expressed in the Hebrew word, Shalom, which means more than the absence of conflict or illness. It is the health, healing and wholeness we find in and through God’s Christ, as God comes to us in Word and sacrament.

Our pastor, the Rev. Dr. Neil Buono, shared his five year vision for our congregation in the winter of 2008. The centerpiece of that vision for our life together is that we move toward becoming more fully the healthy, caring, Christ-centered community of faith God has called us to be. You can access this vision statement and other information about our congregation on our website – www.princeofpeacetopeka.org.

We live by four core values that express who we are.

We see ourselves as a welcoming, caring, loving and growing community of faith. Of course, we don’t always live by these core values because we are a broken, sinful people. But when we are at our best, these define who we are.

Welcoming

We are a community that welcomes the stranger – the one who is broken and in spiritual need. Our worship practice is intended to be welcoming. We offer the sacrament of holy communion at every major service of the church. All baptized Christians who confess the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine as taught by the Lutheran Church are invited to join us in receiving this blessed sacrament for healing and peace.

Caring

We are a caring community – we aspire to express our support for one another in ways that reveal God’s healing love. We have an active and vital Stephen Ministry program of one on one care, as well as many Christ Care Small Groups – small communities of caring and serving. We have a parish nurse, and our pastor is also a pastoral counselor.

Loving

We are a loving community – striving, though not always realizing, a love that reaches out to those who see themselves as not worthy of God’s love and mercy. And we love our children! We support one of the finest preschools in the Topeka community – a preschool that is accredited by the National Lutheran Schools Association.

Growing

Finally, we are a growing community – a community that values growing in Christ, and being shaped by the Word of God. In these and many other values, we seek to live out the faith to which we have been called, giving witness to the deep truth that our true citizenship is in heaven and we are God’s ambassadors to the world. We are all about the ministry of reconciliation - proclaiming and living the love of God in Christ.