

## **ST. PAUL LUTHERAN SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Paul Lutheran School provides a Biblically-integrated, academically excellent education for students. St. Paul Lutheran School partners with families to equip children to boldly reflect the character of Jesus Christ.

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

St. Paul Lutheran School (SPLS) is a ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church (SPLC). SPLC is part of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The LCMS is a mission-oriented and Bible-based denomination that confesses the historic, orthodox Christian faith in the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a faith built on “the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”<sup>1</sup> The LCMS teaches and responds to the love of the Triune God, who created all that exists, became man to suffer, die, and rise again for the world’s redemption, and brings people to faith and new life through His Word and Sacraments. The three persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are coequal and coeternal, one God.

LCMS congregations all hold to a shared confession of Jesus Christ as taught in Holy Scripture. We believe without reservation that the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice. In addition, the LCMS accepts without reservation the writings contained in the Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (the Confessions).

SPLC adheres to the authority of Holy Scripture and holds that the Confessions are a correct interpretation and presentation of biblical doctrine. SPLC thus conforms its teaching and practice to the Scriptures and the Confessions.

SPLS educates our students according to these principles. Christian education permeates every subject of instruction and every interaction between student and educator at our school. Specifically, Luther’s Small Catechism heavily informs our approach to Christian Education as it includes: (1) the Ten Commandments, (2) the Apostle’s Creed, (3) The Lord’s Prayer, (4) the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, (5) Office of the Keys and Confession, and (6) the Sacrament of the Altar.

Partnership with parents is an important part of our mission. We believe students are most successful when the values taught at home are consistent with the values taught at school.

This statement of faith is meant as a brief overview of our beliefs. It does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. The Senior Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church oversees all matters of SPLS doctrine, and is accountable to the St. Paul Lutheran Church Council for such oversight.

**a. about the Bible<sup>i</sup>**

Everything Lutherans believe comes from the Bible, God's message of love and hope for all people. The Bible is the written Word of God, handed down to us in order to point us to the truth that we are saved from our sin and eternal death by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that the Bible is completely reliable and without error. In it we learn everything we need to know about God's love and His gifts to us.

**b. about God**

There is only one true God—the Triune God—who exists in three separate but equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God the Father is our maker and the creator of all things. By the Father's word, all things were made, and we are His most beloved creation; we are closest to His heart. The Son is Jesus Christ, who came to earth as the perfect "go-between" between God and humanity. He has redeemed us and pleads for us before the Father. The Holy Spirit calls us to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, keeps us in the one true faith, and equips us for living out our faith.

**c. about us**

We all fall short of God's expectations because we are all born "sinful." Sin can be summed up as all the things we say, think, do, and don't do, that fall outside of God's holy will for our lives and end up separating us from God.

Sin was brought into the world when Satan lured the first people God created (Adam and Eve) into temptation through their own free will, breaking the perfect relationship between God and us. From that point on, sin became part of our very existence. Because God also demands perfect obedience, our ultimate punishment became death.

Yet God is a loving God whose will is not for us to live in eternal punishment. That's why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life He requires and to become our substitute. Christ took our sin upon Himself and died on the cross, on our behalf. When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, He bears our sin and gives us His forgiveness.

***"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."***<sup>2</sup>

**d. about "being saved"**

There is absolutely nothing we can do to "be saved"—Jesus Christ has already done everything necessary. In His death and resurrection, everyone who believes in Jesus as Savior has been brought back into a right relationship with God. That means that, on account of Jesus, everyone who believes is "justified," or declared innocent by God. God has done justice to the world's sins; because of Jesus, all who believe are forgiven and will live eternally.

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<sup>i</sup> Sections "a" through "h" of this Statement "used with permission of International Lutheran Laymen's League, all rights reserved"

We do not cooperate in our salvation and there is nothing we could ever present to God to make our way into eternal life with Him—not money or even good works. Neither can we really feel it or prove it. We cannot reason our way to salvation, nor can we earn it. All we can do is to believe in Him, trusting that Jesus has already done all that is necessary for us.

**e. about faith**

It is through faith in Jesus that we receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life—by believing that He has freed us from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin. Faith is a gift worked in us by the power of the Holy Spirit; it doesn't come to us through anything we are capable of, but through what God does for us. We simply receive what God is already offering out of His great love.

**f. about good works**

Since there is nothing we can ever do to earn salvation, we do not do good works in order to be saved; good works are done out of praise and thanks because we are saved. Such good works include, but are certainly not limited to, serving and caring for the needs of others, honoring and giving respect to those in authority, honoring our vows and commitments, and generally doing what God considers to be good and right. It's often said that Martin Luther expressed it this way: God doesn't need our good works, but our neighbor does.

**g. about grace**

Lutherans often refer to grace. While we deserved to pay the penalty for our sins, God had a different plan. Christ paid the debt and we receive forgiveness and eternal life from Him that is offered freely—out of unconditional love. That's why it's called grace—because it is truly undeserved.

***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”<sup>3</sup>***

God has provided tangible ways through which He delivers His grace to those who believe, assuring us that the sins we commit are forgiven for Jesus' sake. These are called the “means of grace” and are God's Word, holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). Through these means, God makes Himself known to us in a very personal way: God's Word reveals His faithfulness and love; Baptism is our rebirth and renewal in Jesus; the Lord's Supper is our closest communion with Christ as we receive His body and blood.

**h. about life after death**

On Judgment Day—we don't know when—Jesus Christ is going to return. On that day, everyone who has died will be raised and those who are still alive will be bodily transformed. At that time, the final judgment will take place. Those who do not believe will go into eternal damnation in hell and all those who believe in Jesus as Savior will have eternal life in heaven.

**i. about discipleship and evangelism<sup>ii</sup>**

We believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to faith and leads us to a sanctified life here on earth.<sup>4</sup>

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

We believe we are called to teach others to obey and follow Jesus Christ as described in Scripture.<sup>6</sup>

We believe we are called to speak the truth in love to equip our children, students, brethren, and neighbors to serve and follow God and to resist evil.<sup>7</sup>

We believe we are called to explain our hope in Christ.<sup>8</sup>

We believe we are called to be humble, gentle, patient, loving, and respectful. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

**j. about life, marriage, gender, and sexuality**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value human life.<sup>10</sup>

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.<sup>11</sup>

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.<sup>12</sup>

We believe celibacy is also in accordance with the will of God and not every human being need marry.<sup>13</sup>

We believe divorce is contrary to God's original design and intention for marriage and can be only rarely be justified.<sup>14</sup>

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.<sup>15</sup>

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>ii</sup> Sections “i” and “j” state SPLC’s and SPLS’s Scripturally-based beliefs regarding discipleship, evangelism, life, marriage, gender, and sexuality.

## Scriptural References

- <sup>1</sup> Ephesians 2:20.
- <sup>2</sup> John 3:16.
- <sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2:8–9.
- <sup>4</sup> Acts 2:38–39.
- <sup>5</sup> Acts 3:19–21; Romans 10:9–10; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11.
- <sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:18–20; 2 Timothy 4:1–5.
- <sup>7</sup> Ephesians 4:7–16, 20–25, 6:10–17.
- <sup>8</sup> 1 Peter 3:15–16.
- <sup>9</sup> Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:31; Ephesians 4:1–2; 1 Peter 3:15–16.
- <sup>10</sup> Psalm 139.
- <sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:26–27.
- <sup>12</sup> Genesis 2:18–25.
- <sup>13</sup> Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:8, 32–38.
- <sup>14</sup> Matthew 5:31–32, 19:3–12.
- <sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2–5; Hebrews 13:4.
- <sup>16</sup> Matthew 15:18–20; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10.