

## We Believe In:

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- Creation (as described in the Bible)
- Sin (including original sin)
- Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
- Salvation (through Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection)
- The Church (Humans as the "body" of Christ through the Holy Spirit)
- Faith (salvation comes through it, a gift of the Holy Spirit)
- Sanctification (the living of a God pleasing life)
- Scripture (inspired and inerrant)
- Confessional subscription
- The Sacraments (Baptism and Communion)
- End times

These theological concepts are mentioned or described in the sections that follow. Our pastors would be happy to further explain them or any other topic about God in more detail.

## Sacraments and Faith

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We believe that God delivers His gifts of faith and forgiveness in various ways, but that He promises that they can always be found in His Word and in the **Sacraments** (Baptism and Holy Communion). We center our times of worship around these "Means of Grace." While frequent (weekly!) times of worship are essential for any Christian to stay connected to God and His Church, we also believe that Christ calls us to follow in His earthly ministry by serving others. This should be done on an individual basis and in a collective way. Faith "takes hold" of the gifts of God and delivers to us the restored relationship Jesus earned for us on the cross. The task given to Christians is to grow in their walk with God so that they can live out their earthly life in service to Him (often in service to others) and then join God in eternity when either He **ends the world** or takes us to be with Him upon our death.



## Immanuel Lutheran Church and Student Center

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## What We Believe

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 **Immanuel Lutheran**  
Church and Student Center

*A member congregation of the Lutheran  
Church Missouri Synod*

## God and Creation

We believe that God created the Universe and EVERYTHING in it during the Biblical account of **creation**. God created humans to care for creation, made them in His own image and placed them in paradise. He also gave them free will to obey (trust) Him or to disobey (**sin**). Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and were separated from Him because of it. With the introduction of sin came also the introduction of death into God's perfect creation.

God is perfect and cannot tolerate evil (sin) in any form or He would cease to be perfectly good. He does love His creation and most especially the children He created in His image. While Adam and Eve were required to leave paradise, God did not abandon them. He remained with them and their descendants in various ways maintaining a relationship with them. All of Adam and Eve's children inherited a sinful condition from their parents (**original sin**). Throughout the generations, God always assured people of His Grace (an undeserved kindness) and His Mercy (withholding of a deserved consequence). While God forgave the sins of His Children, He also worked through human history to absolve (formally remove guilt and consequence) humanity's sin once and for all.



## Jesus and The Holy Spirit

God's ultimate absolution occurred when God Himself took on human form in the person of Jesus the Christ. While only one God, there are three distinct "persons" within this single God (the **Trinity**). Jesus lived a perfect life, facing sin but never sinning Himself. He suffered in various ways, culminating with allowing Himself to be killed on a cross. In His death all sins are paid for and removed from the equation of human history (**salvation**). Jesus then rose again both in Body and in Spirit after three days. This watershed event informs and directs all of our teaching about God and our understanding of whom and what we are called to be. Following His resurrection, Jesus spent time on earth in His earthly body for forty days then ascended into heaven. Ten days later, the Holy Spirit descended upon humans and the Christian Church began in a formal way. Living in the hearts of all people who believe (this is a deep form of trust, not just an academic assent to existence) they are formed into Christ's earthly body (**The Church**) to be His presence in the World until Jesus returns to end the world and call all believers to Himself.

Without the Holy Spirit in one's heart, **faith** in God (**sanctification**) is impossible. Only by the presence of the Holy Spirit can we come to truly trust God over our own sinful nature or even recognize our sinful nature. With the Holy Spirit we now have free will to once again obey God or disobey Him. The Holy Spirit not only helps us to obey God and live a life pleasing to Him, but reminds us of the forgiveness earned by Christ when we are in need of it.

God inspired humans to write His Word and those words are what we now call "The Bible" or **scripture**. While written by humans, we believe the Bible to be God's Word (**inspired**) and without any error (**inerrant**). Contained in the Bible is God's clear revelation of who He is and how we are to know Him. The Bible is the highest authority when learning about and teaching about God.

Since the Bible is a complex set of books written to various people in various settings (always inspired by God and with out error), we use a set of **confessions** and creeds to clarify what we believe to be the true and accurate teachings God desires us to hear from His Word. The collection of confessions and creeds that emerged from the Reformation of the Church in the 1500's are still the clearest and most faithful understanding of God's Word of which we are aware. Our Church affirms the collection of these writings found in the Book of Concord. As such, we consider ourselves "Confessional" as we confess the teachings found in the Book of Concord as the faithful understanding of God's Word. Martin Luther, a 16th century theologian along with others, helped "Reform" the church from errors that humans had introduced to God's message over the centuries. Because Luther began this movement of being faithful to God's Word, we refer to ourselves as Lutheran as we follow in his footsteps.

