

Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool Statement of Faith

Grace Lutheran Church of New Albany, Indiana, an Indiana Corporation, herein Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool, is part of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. 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” (Ephesians 2:20). With the universal Christian Church, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 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 bring 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, the one true God.

LCMS congregations voluntarily choose to belong to the Synod, and, although diverse in many ways, all hold to the shared confession of Jesus Christ as taught in the Holy Scriptures. We believe without reservation that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice. In addition, the Synod accepts without reservation the writings contained in the *Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Believing in the authority of the Holy Scriptures and that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct interpretation and presentation of the Biblical Doctrine, our congregations agree to conform all their teaching and practice to the Scriptures and the Confessions.

The Synod “is not an ecclesiastical government, exercising legislative or coercive powers” (LCMS Constitution, Article VII) concerning its member congregations and ministers. However, the voluntary association of member congregations and ministers include their agreement to respect and honor and uphold (Bylaw 1.7.2, 1.8.1) decisions (resolutions) made by the Synod in its national conventions regarding the understanding of the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and the practices that are consistent with such teaching. The Synod in convention in the “principle legislative assembly” of the LCMS (Bylaw 3.1.1) and its resolutions and statements are the position of the synod in matters of doctrine and life. The Constitution and Bylaws of the LCMS provide specific guidance for the implementation and supervision of the teaching and practice of its members (congregation and rostered church workers).

Congregations of the LCMS, while upholding the teaching and practices that are consistent with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and while honoring the Synod convention resolutions, are self-governed and establish policies based upon the local circumstance and expediency. An LCMS congregation or ministry operates according to its own constitution and bylaws—which are required by Synod Bylaws to be reviewed by the District through which the congregation holds membership in the Synod—and therein establishes an orderly way of making decisions and determines which individuals or entities in the congregation (i.e. the pastor, church council, board of elders) will have authority to act on behalf of the congregation in specific circumstances. The constitution and Bylaws of Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool govern our decision-making and policies.

Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool Statement on Biological Sex, Marriage and Morality

While recognizing that some individuals are born with sex chromosome anomalies which make them neither distinctly male or female, or whose physical characteristics make sex assignment at birth uncertain, we believe that it is the intent of the Creator that each individual be socially identified as either male or female (Genesis 1:26-27).

We believe the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as designated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (I Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10). We will uphold the teachings of the Holy Scriptures on these matters, which is our final authority and rule.

Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool Statement of Belief in the Sanctity of Life

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 and mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. (Psalm 139) We therefore are called to defend, protect, and value **all** human life. God calls we who are His own to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves; therefore we will defend and uphold God’s will for the life of those who need us to speak on their behalf.

Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool Marriage Policy

The marriage policy of Grace Lutheran Church of New Albany, Indiana, a member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is and always has been consistent with the Synod's beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24-25) and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:32). The official position of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Resolution 3-21 ("To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions"), is that homosexual unions come under the categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; I Corinthians 6:9-10; I Timothy 1:9-10) as contrary to God's design (Romans 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with the other statements, papers, and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and marriage. Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception, or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

I have read and understand the Grace Lutheran Church and Preschool Statement of Faith.

Signature

Date