

# Core Beliefs and Values

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## Core Beliefs

At St. Paul, we believe that God deserves to be the subject of every sentence involving our spiritual lives:

1. God has created all that exists, and the truth of God's power and love is revealed in the Holy Bible;
2. God intervenes in our broken lives, fractured relationships, and unjust world through a personal desire to bring peace and wholeness;
3. God entered human history in an intimate way through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
4. God loves, saves, and forgives us by grace alone;
5. God offers us a particular and peculiar way of life through Jesus Christ that is a hope-filled alternative to the consumeristic and self-centered ways of the world;
6. God works through the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to create a world guided by generosity, hospitality, and forgiveness;
7. God offers the gifts of new life and forgiveness of sin through Christ's sacraments of baptism and holy communion;
8. God changes lives through the Good News of Jesus Christ who calls on us to:
  - live lives of faithful discipleship,
  - practice compassion and justice for a hurting world,
  - welcome others to explore this life with us, no matter where we are on the journey of faith.

## Core Values

Five core values shape the heart and soul of everything St. Paul is about.

**Radical Hospitality.** Everyone counts at St. Paul, from the oldest to the youngest person. Everyone matters. We take seriously the biblical understanding of the church as the Body of Christ. In our best moments, the people of St. Paul function as interdependently as the parts of a human body working together. We rejoice in each other's joys and sorrows. We take an interest in the texture of other peoples' lives. And we welcome each other warmly as though each and every one of us is a special guest in the house of the Lord.

**Passionate Worship.** Nothing a congregation does compares with the importance and passion of its worship life. Worshiping together with other believers is our most prized moment for giving honest thanks to God. It's that focused occasion in a given week for all of us to stop pretending to be God. Lutheran worship, if it is new to you, is not a spectator sport. Everyone participates in the exuberant praise, stirring music, grace-filled words, holy communion, and prayers that call upon the power of God.

**Intentional Faith Formation.** Lutheran Christians consider their lives to be unfinished products. They are constantly seeking to grow in faith and deepen the meaning of their days. Lifelong learning is a big deal at St. Paul. We delight in every opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God over the entire course of our lives. Ours is a congregation that does not act as if it has all the answers. In fact, we think clarity in asking the right questions is more important than presuming to have some corner on the truth, especially given the complex issues of our day.

**Adventurous Mission and Service.** St. Paul is a servant church. We take our cues for serving others from Jesus Christ, who in a single sentence summed up the importance of being available to others: I came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28). As easy as it is to take care of oneself in this world, anyone with a heart full of grace and a soul inspired by love can be a servant. The people of St. Paul take pride in strengthening the lives of less fortunate people in our community and across the world, even when it means congregational adventure or personal sacrifice.

**Extravagant Generosity.** Grateful people are generous people. Interestingly enough, they also happen to be happy people. St. Paul centers its life around gratitude to God for the abundant blessings of life. We believe strongly in the idea that "you make a living by what you earn; you make a life by what you give away." Our congregation makes an extraordinary commitment to give generously to others. This generosity is fueled by the individual joy and commitment of all our people seeking to lead grateful (and happy) lives.