

FAITH 101

Church Information Course



“Go ... make disciples” Matthew 28:19

“I will build my church” Matthew 16:18

Living Faith Lutheran Brethren Church
805 14th Avenue SW Watford City, North Dakota
701-842-4617 www.livingfaithnd.org office@livingfaithnd.org

Section 1 • Identity & Purpose

A vertical banner with a dark background. On the left side, there is a smaller version of the Living Faith logo and the text "LIVING FAITH" above the vertical text "Identity & Purpose". On the right side, there are three bullet points, each starting with a diamond symbol. The text is white and yellow, with some words highlighted in blue.

- ❖ Through God's saving **Word** we have been adopted into God's Family and share in the saving Work of Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:5 & 2:8-10, 2:19)
- ❖ As **Brothers & Sisters** in Jesus Christ we worship, learn and work together and serve each other. (Mark 10:29-30, Ephesians 4-6, Colossians 3-4, 1 Timothy 3:14-15, 4:6-16)
- ❖ We are engaged in the **Mission** Jesus called us to - making disciples. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Vision and Brief History

A heartfelt vision for the people of the community by Pastor Burton Bundy and some local residents was the initial start for a Lutheran Brethren church in Watford City, ND. After a citywide meeting in the summer of 2009, it was decided to hold the first gathering in October. An agreement was made with the First Presbyterian Church to use their facilities until the congregation could establish a home of its own. Just before the startup Pastor Bundy became ill and was unable to continue his ministry. A group of 13 met together and after prayer decided to go ahead. The endeavor was named Living Faith, knowing that is what it would take to make it happen.



Living Faith is part of a
Family of Congregations called
The Church of the Lutheran Brethren

A DEFINING value
from the start:
Lutheran
congregations
consisting of
confessing believers



Convention Delegates - the first years

A DRIVING value
from the start:
Bringing the
Gospel to
peoples who
have never
heard.



Since 1900 Lutheran Brethren
congregations have joined together

- ❖ out of shared common Biblical conviction
- ❖ for the purpose of accomplishing a common mission



Together we train Pastors,
Missionaries and Congregational
Leaders through



Together we encourage and
support planting new
congregations in North America



Together we engage in bringing
the Good News of the Gospel of
Jesus to unreached peoples.



Section 2 • God's Revelation



Value 1

LIVING through the WORD

The Bible is central in our congregations and in our households. The Word of God is the focus of our worship services, the textbook for our teaching ministries, and the foundation of our daily lives. Whether we are preaching, teaching, singing or just talking, we want to be people of the Word.

**MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS
IS OUR MISSION**

Beliefs shape who we are

"Like a rudder sets a course for a ship, what a church believes determines its direction and destination."

Statement of Faith



Value 1

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**THE WORD OF GOD IS THE
MEANS THE HOLY SPIRIT USES TO
CREATE AND MATURE DISCIPLES.**

The Bible

The Bible, including both Old and New Testaments as originally given, is the verbally and plerarily inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part, and is therefore the final authoritative guide for faith and conduct

The Scripture is God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17

What is the main focus of the Bible?

John 5:39, Luke 24:25-27, John 8:31-32

How did Jesus view Scripture?

John 10:35b

How does God create new spiritual life?

1 Peter 1:23

The Trinity

There is one God eternally existent in three distinct persons in one divine essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:1-3

Matthew 28:19

2 Corinthians 13:14

God the Father

God the Father has revealed Himself as the Creator and preserver of the universe, to Whom the entire creation and all creatures are subject.

Natural Revelation *Psalm 19:1-6, Romans 1:19-20*

Special Revelation *Psalm 19:7-11, John 3:16*

The Human Race

God created Adam and Eve in His image to live in fellowship with Him. They fell into sin through the temptation of Satan and thereby lost fellowship with God. Through their disobedience the entire human race became totally depraved, that is, self-centred sinners who oppose God, and who by nature are unable to trust, fear or love Him. They are subject to the devil, and are condemned to death under the eternal wrath of God.

Romans 3:9-19

Romans 3:23

God the Son

Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the image of the invisible God. To accomplish our redemption, He became fully human, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, by His perfect obedience and substitutionary death on the cross, has purchased our redemption. He arose from the dead for our justification in the body in which He was crucified. He ascended into heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, as our interceding High Priest. He will come a second time personally, bodily, and visibly to gather the believers unto Himself and to establish His millennial kingdom. He will judge the living and the dead and make an eternal separation between believers and unbelievers. His kingdom shall have no end.

Jesus is the promised Savior *Matthew 16:15-17*

Jesus is true God *John 1:1, 1:14, Colossians 1:15-17*

Jesus died for our sins *Romans 3:21-26*

Jesus will make a final separation between believers and unbelievers *Matthew 25:31-46*

Jesus is our mediator *1 Timothy 2:3-6*

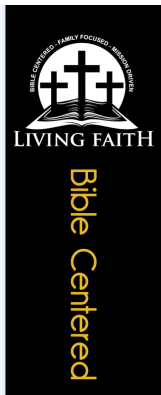
Jesus will return in the body *Acts 1:11*

Section 3 • God's Saving Work



Law and Gospel

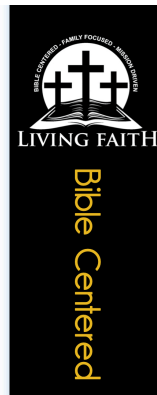
Through the Word of the Law God brings sinners to know their lost condition and to repent. Through the Word of the Gospel He brings sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, to be justified, to enter the process of sanctification, and to have eternal life. This occurs as the Holy Spirit awakens them to see their sin, convicts them of their guilt of sin, and calls them to repent and believe, inviting and enabling them to accept God's grace in Christ. Each one who thus believes is instantly forgiven and credited with Christ's righteousness. The Word then teaches and guides the believer to lead a godly life.



Value 2 LIVING through the WORD

We revere GOD'S LAW. The Law of God cannot save us, but it is necessary for our salvation. We need to see our sin and be driven to the cross of Christ for forgiveness. We need to be reminded that we cannot earn God's love or merit His blessings. We need the ethical guidance that God's Law gives. We dare not make up our own morality.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE MEANS THE HOLY SPIRIT USES TO CREATE AND MATURE DISCIPLES.



Value 3 LIVING through the WORD

THE GOSPEL is our treasure and our joy. We want the Good News of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ to be the centerpiece of our mission. All people need the Gospel. God's children need to hear it again and again. The Good News is God's power, which saves us, draws us together and motivates us for service.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE MEANS THE HOLY SPIRIT USES TO CREATE AND MATURE DISCIPLES.

Galatians 3:10-14 Find the law and the gospel in this passage

Salvation

Eternal salvation is available to every living human being on earth by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This salvation consists of an instantaneous aspect and an ongoing, continual aspect.

Justification

Justification is God's gracious act by which He, for Christ's sake, instantaneously acquits repentant and believing sinners and credits them with Christ's righteousness. At that moment, God gives each one who believes a new and godly nature and the Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. There is no place for human effort in justification.

Romans 4:4-5

Romans 8:1

"Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe . . . that we poor sinful human beings are justified before God, that is absolved and declared free and exempt from all our sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, . . . without any merit or worth of our own, also without any, present, or any subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness." (Formula of Concord)

Sanctification

Sanctification is God's gracious, continual work of spiritual renewal and growth in the life of every justified person. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works to reproduce the character of Christ within the lives of all believers, instructing and urging them to live out their new nature. The Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to count themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in and bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers. He calls, empowers and equips them to serve God in the home, in the community, and as part of the Church Universal. The process of sanctification will be complete only when the believer reaches glory.

Gracious, Ongoing Work of God 1 Corinthians 6:11

Spiritual Renewal and Growth Ephesians 4:12-16

Overcoming Spiritual Enemies Ephesians 6:10-11

Dead to Sin but Alive to God Romans 6:11

Producing Spiritual Fruit and Enabling for Service Galatians 5:22-23

Completed in Glory 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Section 4 • The Work of the Holy Spirit



Value 4 LIVING through the WORD

The Word and the Sacraments are God's precious means of grace. The Word teaches us, Baptism washes us, and the Lord's Supper nourishes us. In our sacramental life together we are brought again and again to the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, who alone is the source of our salvation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE MEANS GOD USES TO CREATE AND MATURE DISCIPLES.

Sacrament: A visible word, truth dramatized. We speak of sacraments as those acts which Christ has commanded, which employ visible elements and promise invisible gifts of grace, such as forgiveness of sins.

"A Sacrament is a holy act, instituted by Christ, in which by visible means, He gives and confirms His invisible grace" (Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism Faith and Fellowship Press, Olsen and Rinden: 108).

Means of Grace

The knowledge and benefit of Christ's redemption from sin is brought to the human race through the means of grace, namely the Word and the sacraments.

Romans 10:13-15

How many sacraments do we recognize? _____

Baptism

In the Sacrament of Baptism, God offers the benefits of Christ's redemption to all people and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration and newness of life to all who believe. God calls the baptized person to live in daily repentance, that is, in sorrow for sin, in turning from sin, and in personal faith in the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ. By grace we are daily given the power to overcome sinful desires and live a new life in Christ. Those who do not continue to live in God's grace need to be brought again to repentance and faith through the Law and Gospel.

Baptism - continued ...

Romans 6:3-4

Acts 22:16

Titus 3:4-7

1 Peter 3:20-21

Because the sinfulness of human nature passes on from generation to generation and the promise of God's grace includes little children, we baptize infants, who become members of Christ's believing church through baptism. These children need to come to know that they are sinners with a sinful nature that opposes God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they need to confess their sinfulness and yield to God; and possess for themselves forgiveness of their sin through Jesus Christ, as they are led from the faith received in infant baptism into a clear conscious personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior and being assured of salvation, rely solely on the finished work of Christ, and the power of the Gospel to live as children of God.

Two main questions separate those who practice infant baptism from those who do not (ANSWERS in order listed below)

1. How can a child be _____?

2. How can a child _____?

a. Sin, in the basic Biblical meaning, is not a problem of _____

but a problem of _____

Romans 5:12 _____ and _____ passed to all

b. Faith _____ the promises of God.

Faith is a _____ (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Matthew 18:1-6 _____

Luke 18:15 _____

2 Timothy 3:15 from an _____

c. Infants were included in God's _____.

Matthew 19:13-15 _____ brought to Jesus

Colossians 2:11-12 (Lk 2:21) _____ (8 days)

Matthew 28:19-20 God's promise includes _____

Acts 16:14-15, 31:33, 1 Timothy 3:4,12 entire

_____, _____ baptized

(sinful, believe, doing, being, sin, death, believes, gift, believe, receive, infant, covenant, infants, circumcision, whole families, households, families)

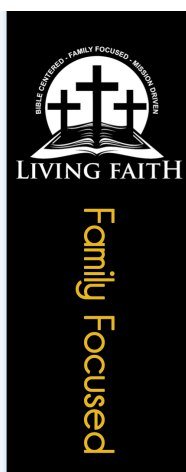
Section 5 • Life Together, Life on Mission



The Church

The Church Universal consists of all those who truly believe on Jesus Christ as Savior. The local congregation is an assembly of believers in a certain locality among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. The confessing membership of the local congregation shall include only those who have been baptized into "the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, maintain a good reputation in the community and accept the constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. It cannot, however, be avoided that hypocrites might be mixed in the congregation; that is, those whose unbelief is not evident to the congregation.

Of the issues that led to the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, church membership was probably foremost [as the founders had noted and were troubled by the fact that in many congregations in their communities] Children were baptized into the church as infants, confirmed in the faith as teenagers, and welcomed to the Lord's table and ushered into membership of the church without much regard for personal confession of faith (Levang, J.A., Church of the Lutheran Brethren: A Believers' Fellowship - A Lutheran Alternative: 103)



Value 5

LIVING as FAMILY

We cherish the love and fellowship of God's people. We need each other. We need the spiritual gifts, which the Holy Spirit imparts to His people. We experience God's peace as we worship and work together, forgive one another, and bear one another's burdens.

**FAMILY IS THE PRIMARY
STRUCTURE
FOR DISCIPLEMAKING.**

Matthew 16:18-19

Acts 2:42-47

Philippians 2:1-5

Church Governance

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren practices the congregational form of church government and the autonomy of the local congregations. The office of pastor and elder is to be filled by men only. The synodical administration has an advisory function as it relates to the congregation, and an administrative function as it relates to the cooperative efforts of the congregations.

Acts 20:28-31

1 Timothy 5:17

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 Timothy 3:4-5

Regarding The "Men Only" Clause

The basic material for this section comes from the Proposed Position Paper for the 1988 Annual Convention Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America Role of Women in the Church: Implications for Suffrage March, 1988. See also, The Committee Report on the Role of Women in the Church.

Affirmation 3: God created both male and female in His image. He created them equal though different. He gave them dominion over the created world, and commanded them to be fruitful and to increase in number.

In Genesis One, Adam and Eve were each created in the image of God and both of them were blessed by God and were given the royal commission to fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over creation.

In Genesis Two, a distinction is uncovered and the relationship between man and woman is revealed. Adam is seen as having leadership in the relationship, pictured for one thing in the naming of Eve. As two persons sharing equally in God's creation and commission, Adam is given leadership before the fall that is recorded in Genesis Three.



Value 6 **LIVING on MISSION**

We long for people to trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, to come to know Him in a personal way. We are called by the love of Christ to share His Gospel. Our mission is as local as our neighbourhood and as universal as the whole world.

**VOCATION IS THE PRIMARY
CONTEXT
FOR DISCIPLEMAKING**



Value 7 **LIVING in DEPENDENCE**

We seek to be people of prayer. Whether in public worship, small groups or in our personal lives, we want prayer to be foundational. Prayer supports and propels us in our mission. We desire that prayer be as essential in our ministries as breathing is to our physical life.

**DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE
PRIVILEGED TO LIVE IN
DEPENDENCE ON GOD'S SUPPLY.**
