

# Abounding Joy Lutheran Church - Statement of Faith – 2016

## St. Cloud, Minnesota

**Section 1.** This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, that is the canonical books of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of humanity, and hence the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life.

**Section 2.** This congregation receives and confesses the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess. We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, and the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Nothing contrary to these confessions shall be taught in the congregation, either in preaching or in the instruction of the youth and adults.

**Section 3.** As Christians, we affirm the following:

- a. **Jesus is the only way of salvation.** God's justification of the godless by faith in Jesus Christ is the heart of the Gospel.
- b. **The Bible is the final authority over the faith and life of the Church.** The Bible is God's Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. It is a light to, rather than a reflection of, the world.
- c. **The Lutheran Confessions are a faithful interpretation of Scripture.** As faith seeks understanding, the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us in the truth.
- d. **The Church's ministry is centered in the priesthood of all believers.** In Baptism, the Holy Spirit makes all Christians priests to serve others for Jesus' sake.
- e. **Congregations call pastors to serve with them in ministry.** Pastors preach and administer the sacraments to keep good order in the church, but are not necessary for Christ to be present in Word or Sacrament.
- f. **The local congregation is the heart of Christ's mission.** The Christian Church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament. Regional and national structures exist to serve local churches.
- g. **Faithful Christian Worship keeps Christ at the center.** The purpose of worship is to proclaim Christ and His saving work. It is not our sacrifice to God, but God coming to us to save us and guide us by His Word.
- h. **Church governance should be representative and accountable.** National organizational assemblies must respect the integrity and authority of local congregations.
- i. **Christian unity is given by, and centered in, Jesus Christ.** True ecumenism respects the diversity within the Body of Christ, embracing worship, work and service with other Christian churches without compromising core convictions.
- j. **Biblical norms establish the boundaries and proper use of sexuality.** The Bible clearly teaches that marriage is a holy bond between one man and one woman and is the only proper arena for sexual activity. From marriages, families are formed which serve as the building blocks of civilization.

The above statements accurately reflect my firm Christian beliefs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Full Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_