



PRINCE OF PEACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

TRANSFORM • EQUIP • EXTEND

Frequently Asked Questions

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Q: WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

A: Christians believe that God in his great love gave his one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as a sacrifice for the sin of all people, including themselves. ([John 3:16](#)) Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and won the victory over death, thereby giving all who believe in him the gift of forgiveness, and the certainty of everlasting life. ([John 20:1-31](#)) In thankfulness for God's mercy, Christians devote themselves to being transformed to look more and more like Jesus through love for God and love for neighbor. ([Romans 12:1-2](#))

Q: I BELIEVE GOD FORGIVES ME, BUT I CANNOT FORGIVE MYSELF. WHAT DO I DO?

A: God's Word surpasses our own human thinking and feeling about personal guilt. At a time of needing to know forgiveness, God's Holy Spirit speaks ultimately through His Holy Word using many different expressions and pictures to remind us that the blood of Jesus paid the price of our guilt once and for all. (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18) The church offers private confession and forgiveness for those who need the assurance given through individual pastoral care. (James 5:15)

Q: HOW CAN I EXPERIENCE GOD'S GUIDANCE IN A DECISION I HAVE TO MAKE?

A: We believe that the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to guide us in specific decisions. Our prayer life combined with the reading of Scripture is the primary way in which we are in dialogue with God. The guidance and affirmation of Christians around us is also a tool God uses to guide us. (Psalm 119:105)

Q: COULD GOD BE PUNISHING ME FOR SOMETHING WRONG I DID?

A: We believe that God poured out all the punishment due our sin and rebellion on Jesus when He died on the cross. When Jesus said "It is finished" he indicated that the price was paid. There is no punishment left for you, only God's goodness and mercy. Still bad things happen to all people. God uses those negative things to strengthen our faith in Him and to help us develop spiritual muscles we will need to accomplish His purpose. (Romans 8:31-39)

Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

A: Jesus told the thief on the cross: "Today, you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Because of His clear words we believe that when our bodies die, that our spirits go immediately to heaven or hell, depending on whether or not we rely on Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection in our behalf. When Jesus

comes back on the Last Day He will raise up all of our dead bodies and reunite the bodies with the spirit whether that spirit is in heaven or hell. (I Corinthians 15:51-57).

Q: IF GOD IS A LOVING GOD, HOW CAN HE SEND SOMEONE TO HELL, ESPECIALLY IF THE PERSON NEVER HAD OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR HIS WORD?

A: God is holy. Anything or any person that is sinful cannot be in the presence of God without being destroyed. God is also merciful: *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him"* (John 3:17). If people reject the gift Jesus is offering, that person is really choosing to pay the penalty for their sin eternally in hell. With great patience, God is preserving the world until the time that all have an opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus. (II Peter 3:8-10) Ultimately, we rely on a merciful God for those who have not heard about God's great love. Yet, this spurs the Christian to share the Good News of God's mercy and love with people they know, for God wants each of His children to have the gift for which He sacrificed His Son. (Romans 6:23)

PRAYER

Q: HOW DO I ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO PRAY WITH ME?

A: You can contact the church office by phone (703-451-5855), or email (info@poplc.org) us, or come to a worship service at Prince of Peace and we will take time to pray with you. If you come to a worship service, a Care Minister will meet you and pray with you. You can also call the church office to make an appointment with one of our prayer ministers who will spend time in prayer with you. Pastors and other staff members of Prince of Peace are willing to make themselves available to pray with you.

Q: DOES GOD REALLY ANSWER PRAYER?

A: According to God's Word, He answers every prayer that is prayed in confidence and in the name of Jesus. (Mark 11:24) Just like a loving parent, his answers will sometimes be "no", sometimes "yes", sometimes "not yet." (2 Corinthians 12:8-10) If God says "no" or "not yet," we believe that He has a better gift waiting for us than we can now imagine.

Q: IF GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING THAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN, HOW DOES MY PRAYER HELP?

A: Prayer is the exercise of our faith. We need to pray in order to develop a growing and mature faith. (Mark 9:14-24)

Q: IS THERE A RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO PRAY?

A: Even as a mom or dad loves to hear their child's voice, the child learns over time which requests fall within the will of their mom or dad by the way in which over time the child recognizes the way the parent answers the request. Jesus teaches us to pray with faith and to bring all things to His Father in His name. (John 16:23)

GOD

Q: IF GOD IS LOVING AND ALL-POWERFUL WHY DOES HE ALLOW SUCH HORRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN?

A: God's ways are sometimes very difficult to understand from our limited perspective. Sin came into the world with the first sin of Adam and Eve. All horrible things that happen are a result of the sin that is in the world since the beginning of creation. Some of the man-made disasters are a direct result of someone's choice. In John 11, we see the way in which Jesus stayed away from Mary and Martha at the time of their brother's illness so that they could see an even bigger miracle. At all times, God promises to give great gifts to those who love Him. (Romans 8:28)

Q: WHY DO CHRISTIANS SAY THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD? IS THAT NOT A BIGOTED VIEW?

A: Christians have learned from Holy Scriptures how God has revealed himself as one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It teaches that any other one claiming to be god is an impostor. Christians hold Scripture as the highest authority. While it may seem to be bigoted to some, Jesus says: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father, except through Me"* (John 14:6).

Q: HOW DO WE KNOW THAT JESUS IS REALLY GOD?

A: We know that Jesus is God because Scriptures identify that Jesus

- a) Is recognized by divine names (reserved only for God, i.e. [John 20:28](#))
- b) Has divine attributes (that only God has, i.e. [Matthew 28:20](#))
- c) Does divine work (work only God can do, i.e. [Luke 8:22-25](#))
- d) Receives divine honor and glory (receives the worship reserved only for God, i.e. [Hebrews 1:6](#))

Q: DOES GOD SPEAK TO PEOPLE TODAY?

A: We believe that God speaks primarily through His Holy Word. We also know that in Biblical times he spoke through prophets and apostles. At the same time, God is not limited. The Bible records specific ways that God revealed Himself with audible voices, pillars of fire and cloud, a whispering voice, and even through a talking donkey! Jesus told the religious leaders that if his followers were not allowed to praise him the rocks would start singing. (Luke 20:40)

THE BIBLE

Q: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

A: Lutherans believe that the Bible is the completely trustworthy Word of God written in human language and thought forms but with God's very Breath of Truth providing us with what we need for life today and life forever. We primarily celebrate two Sacraments—Holy Baptism and Holy Communion as the way that God gives us His gifts of forgiveness, faith, and eternal life through that same Word.

Q: HOW CAN THE BIBLE BE WITHOUT ERROR IF IT WAS WRITTEN BY PEOPLE WHO MAKE MISTAKES?

A: Even though they are sinful, the Holy Spirit worked through people and their individual personalities to write His Words so that we can read, hear, and understand God's holy thought.

Q: THE BIBLE HAS SO MANY UNFAMILIAR NAMES, PLACES, AND STORIES. HOW CAN I READ AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORD?

A: Two handles that help people put God's Word in perspective are the following:

- (1) Law and Gospel ~ the two main teachings of Scripture are Law, what God demands of us, and Gospel, the Good News of what God has done for us. These teachings can give meaning to much of the Bible.
- (2) Jesus Christ ~ we believe that Holy Scriptures were written to reveal Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

THE CHURCH

Q: WHAT IS A CHURCH?

A: The word "church" is used in a number of ways. It may be a reference to a building or to the people who gather in that space every Sunday. It may also refer to a denominational group such as Lutherans, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Baptists, etc. At Prince of Peace, we understand the church to be the number of those who believe in Jesus Christ, whether or not they attend a church.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IN A CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SERVICE?

A: In a Christian worship service one will experience specific times for:

- Confession and assurance of forgiveness of sins
- Worship and adoration of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through music and singing
- The reading and hearing of God's Word
- Thoughts about God's Word in a sermon
- Many times there is a children's message
- A time to express our faith in the words of a creed (a statement of faith)
- Prayers
- A time of offering
- Holy Communion and the blessing of little children

The main goal of the worship time is to give glory to God. We hope that every person walks out having received the good news of forgiveness and other specific ways God will bless them in their lives.

Q: CAN I TAKE COMMUNION IN YOUR CHURCH?

A: Holy Communion is the Lord's special gift through which he gives the communicant His very body and His very blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine for the forgiveness of sins. All who are baptized and believe in those promises are invited to receive Holy Communion. (I Corinthians 11:23- 29)

Q: WHAT MAKES LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS UNIQUE FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS?

A: The Lutheran church is a worldwide communion of Christians whose mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people. We believe that God graciously forgives us and offers us new life through the death and resurrection of His Son. We are fully committed to serving our Lord and our community in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Prince of Peace is a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). The LCMS is unique among other Christian denominations as it has continued to maintain the Reformation truths: Scripture alone; Grace alone; Faith alone, and Christ alone. The church body's headquarters are in St. Louis, Missouri, while local congregations are supported by 35 districts across the United States.

THE LCMS AND THE SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT

Links to the LCMS AND THE SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT

- [LCMS](http://www.lcms.org/) <http://www.lcms.org/>
- [Southeastern District](http://www.se.lcms.org/) <http://www.se.lcms.org/>

Q: WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

A: Church membership is a personal commitment of individuals and families to one particular group or community of Christians. While the people, programs, preaching and other aspects of a church may draw someone to a church, becoming a member signals a commitment to Christ and reflects a significant decision which should be carefully made. Formal membership in a particular church is not a pro forma guarantee of spiritual benefits—Christ's Spirit is at work wherever you find His means of grace at work (His Word and the Sacraments). Church membership is a commitment to the congregation at which one will primarily experience worship life and growth in Christ. When one joins a church, one is no longer alone. A member becomes part of the forgiven people of God in that place.

Q: HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER OF PRINCE OF PEACE?

A: When an individual or family expresses a desire to [become a member](#) of Prince of Peace, adult members of the family are encouraged to participate in a "[Doorway](#)" class. This class seeks to ensure that each person has a firm connection with Jesus, our Savior, and it assists people in connecting with others who are a part of or who are becoming a part of the Prince of Peace family.

Those from a faith background other than Lutheran are asked to attend a "The Core: What We Believe" class as a pre-requisite to membership at Prince of Peace. This class offers an overview of the

basics of the Christian faith as taught and confessed in the Lutheran Church. The course emphasizes our connection to Christ and to each other as the body of Christ in this place. Overall, we seek to help people connect with Jesus, discover the gifts God has given them, and to find fulfillment in using those gifts both within the ministry opportunities at Prince of Peace and to discover the power of God at work as we extend God's kingdom into the lives of others in our home, our neighborhoods, our workplace—wherever we may be. If you are interested in membership at Prince of Peace, please contact the church office (703-451-5855 or email info@poplc.org).

Q: WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE SOME OF THE COMMITMENTS RELATED TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

A: Certain things are assumed of members when they join Prince of Peace (PoP). The most important thing is that we are baptized people who have an expressed faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. There is a commitment to the teachings of Jesus and to His mission. Thus, there is a fellowship through the shared faith among all the members.

As one becomes a member they agree to:

- Become part of Christ's team at Prince of Peace
- Regularly attend worship and make regular use of the Sacraments
- Manage their time and spiritual gifts to support the mission and vision of this congregation
- Engage in Bible Study and prayer and other spiritual exercises
- Serve as an ambassador of Jesus Christ every hour and every day
- Set a goal to tithe (1/10) of their earnings for Christ's Kingdom
- Help make decisions as a voting member of Prince of Peace at congregational meetings.

CONTACTING THE CHURCH FOR PERSONAL NEEDS

Q: IF I WANT TO TALK WITH A PASTOR, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A: Call or email the Church office (703-451-5855) to schedule an appointment with one of the pastoral staff. There is no fee for pastoral counseling.

Q: HOW DO I CONTACT A PASTOR IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, SUCH AS A DEATH IN MY FAMILY?

A: If the emergency occurs during the hours of 9 AM – 5 PM Monday - Friday (3 PM on Friday), please call the Church office (703-451-5855) and the Administrative Staff will immediately put you in touch with a Pastor. If the emergency occurs during non-office hours, the Pastors can be called at their home numbers as listed under Contacts. In your time of emergency, the pastors desire to be available and will assist you with grief counseling and prayer.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I OR SOMEONE I LOVE IS SCHEDULED FOR SURGERY OR HOSPITALIZATION?

A: Please call or email the [church office](mailto:info@poplc.org) (703-451-5855) to let us know about yourself or the name of the person and the hospital in which you/they will be a patient. The pastoral staff and lay members of the Hospital Visitation Ministry call on those who are hospitalized. The pastoral staff is very willing to call on family members and friends who are in the hospital per their request. Our ministry is here to serve the entire community.

Q: WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO SCHEDULE A BAPTISM AT PRINCE OF PEACE?

A: Call or email the [Church office](mailto:info@poplc.org) (703-451-5855) and one of the Administrative Assistants will schedule an appointment with one of the pastors. During the appointment, the pastor will answer questions you have about Baptism and schedule a time for a Baptism during a worship service or schedule a private Baptism.

Q: IF WE WOULD LIKE TO PLAN A WEDDING AT PRINCE OF PEACE, WHAT DO WE DO?

A: Call or email the [Church office](mailto:info@poplc.org) (703-451-5855) and the Administrative Staff will schedule a time with one of the pastors. At that time the pastor will share information about pre-marriage counseling and other important information.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Q: HOW DO WE GO ABOUT CALLING A SENIOR PASTOR AT PRINCE OF PEACE

A: The Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Governance Policy Manual reads:

2.2.2.6 In the case of a vacancy in the office of the Senior Pastor,

2.2.2.6.1. The BoSL shall, acting as a call committee, present to the congregation a candidate to receive an appropriately defined call of not less than six months to serve for a limited term as an Intentional Interim Senior Pastor. Article V, Section A of the Prince of Peace Constitution shall apply to the Intentional Interim Senior Pastor. Other actions involving calling of an Intentional Interim Senior Pastor shall be in accordance with Article II, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Constitution. The Intentional Interim Senior Pastor shall perform all the duties of the Senior Pastor and shall provide advice and counsel to the Senior Pastor Call Committee as requested by the Committee. The Interim Senior Pastor shall not be currently serving on the PoP staff or have served on the PoP staff in the five years prior. Should an Intentional Interim Senior Pastor not be available, the BoSL will, with the assistance of the leadership of the Southeastern District LCMS, arrange for a Vacancy Pastor.

4.7. CALLING A SENIOR PASTOR

When seeking to permanently fill a vacancy in the office of the Senior Pastor, the BoSL shall nominate members for a Call Committee to be approved by the congregation. The Committee shall consist of at least one and no more than two members of the BoSL, and at least four members at large from the congregation, elected by the congregation and who have not served on the BoSL for the preceding two years.

- The Call Committee shall:

- Establish a set of criteria for the position, with special attention to the leadership needs under Policy-Based Governance,
- Seek appropriate assistance from the President of the District and Circuit Counselor or the appointed representative for the Circuit Counselor,
- Call for nominations from the congregation,
- Associate Pastors currently serving on the POP staff may be included on the call list,
- The Interim Senior Pastor (See Section 2.2.2.6.) or Vacancy Senior Pastor will not be included on the call list,
- Establish an effective interview and evaluation process which includes telephone and, as needed, personal interviews,
- Provide a list of recommended, qualified candidates to the BoSL,
- Establish and facilitate the interview process for the list of candidates approved by the BoSL,
- Present to the BoSL a summary of the interviews of each candidate, and
- Assist the BoSL in bringing its recommendations to the congregation in accordance with By-Law Article II Section 2.

For reference, Article V, Section A of the Constitution of Prince of Peace is:

The Pastoral Office shall be conferred only upon such candidates who (1) are well qualified for their work, (2) profess and adhere to the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution, and (3) uphold this Constitution and its Bylaws. The Pastoral Office shall include:

- A. Senior Pastor
 - 1. Shall be certified by the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.
 - 2. Shall be called by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
 - 3. Shall serve in such capacity unless removed by death, resignation, or removal by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting.
 - 4. Shall be accountable to the Congregation and the Elected Officers.
 - 5. Shall provide spiritual and programmatic leadership to the Congregation.

For reference, Article II, Section 2 of the Bylaws is:

Section 2. Voting

A. The forum for voting shall be determined by the Board of Servant Leaders. This may include voting by written ballot at worship services, through the mail, ballot box in the Church, Congregational meeting of the Voting Members, or other manner as designated by the Board of Servant Leaders. However, a Congregational meeting shall be held upon petition of 25 Voting Members of the Congregation.

B. No issue will be submitted to the Voting Members for a vote unless the issue has been published at worship services at least two consecutive weeks prior to the vote or by mail at least three days prior to the vote. Town meetings are encouraged as a means to discuss issues with the Congregation before significant issues are voted upon.

C. Issues may be brought before the Voting Members by the Board of Servant Leaders, or by petition of 25 Voting Members of the Congregation.

D. All decisions shall be by simple majority vote of the Voting Members voting, except the following, which shall require two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members voting:

- 1. Amending the Constitution or its Bylaws.
- 2. The call or the removal of Called Workers.
- 3. The merger or dissolution of the church.