

- **Lord's Supper** – *It's Jesus' very Body and Blood, mysteriously (sacramentally) connected to the bread and wine, to assure us of God's full forgiveness!* (1 Corinthians 10:16; Matthew 26:26-28)
- **Jesus' Second Coming** – *At the appointed time Jesus will return, raise all the dead, separate the believers from the non-believers, give eternal life to all believers, and send all non-believers to eternal punishment!* (Acts 17:31; Matthew 24:37-39; Hebrews 9:28; John 5:28-29; Matthew 25:31-46)

Right now, if you are not a Missouri Synod Lutheran, you may find yourself thinking:

1. *My church body believes the same!* **OR**
2. *I disagree with some of those teachings; they cannot be true!*

If you thought **number 1**, I challenge you to check out what your church body teaches – *you might be surprised!* But if **number 2**, I challenge you to open your Bible and let God tell you the truth – *you might be surprised!*

Further Food For Thought

Is the Truth Important? *Yes!* Jesus said: "...the truth will set you free." (NIV John 8:32)

Where is the Truth Found? Jesus prayed to the Father: "Your word is truth." (NAS John 17:17)

To Whom Should We Listen? Jesus said: "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (NIV John 18:37)

Is Jesus the One Way to Heaven? *Yes!* Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the

life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (NIV John 14:6)

Can Anyone Earn His Way to Heaven? *No!*

"You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." (NAS Galatians 5:4)

Is Abortion Okay? *No!* The Lord made us: "...you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." (NIV Psalm 139:13) "You shall not murder." (NIV Exodus 20:13) *Killing the born and preborn is murder!*

Is Homosexuality Wrong? *Yes!* "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable." (NIV Leviticus 20:13)

Is it Okay for Pastors / Priests to Marry?

Yes! "When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever." (NIV Matthew 8:14) *Peter was married!*

Let's Be More Like the Bereans: "Now the Bereans [of Macedonia in the time of Paul] were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (NIV Acts 17:11)

Therefore, faithfully attend church and Bible class and listen to what is said; then be like the Bereans by examining your own Bible to see if your church is preaching and teaching the truth!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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[Last Update: 1-10]

Different is Good!



dare to be different

Introduction

Why, within the one religion of Christianity, are there approximately 35,000 different Christian church bodies or denominations? *Because many churches give very different answers to these three basic questions:*

- *What is our VIEW of the Bible?*
- *How do we INTERPRET the Bible?*
- *How do we APPLY the Bible?*

The way a church body answers those three questions will *highly influence* what it †believes, †teaches, and †preaches, which will also *highly influence* the *daily lives* and *eternal location* of its members. Therefore, ask yourself: **How does my church body answer those questions?**

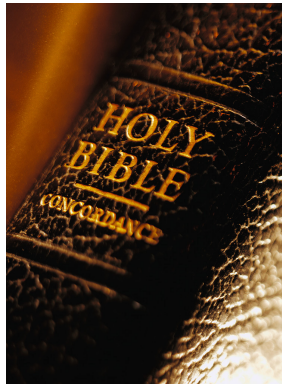
This brochure will give you the answers of *Bethlehem Lutheran Church* – a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church!

This brochure will also identify some **key similarities** and **key differences** between our church and others. As you come to better understand how we are *different*, I hope you also conclude that our *differences* with other church bodies are ✦good, ✦Bible based, and ✦eternally beneficial – *for all people of all time!* **Please lookup the noted passages to better understand and rejoice in the truth!**

Bethlehem's Three Answers

What is our VIEW of the Bible?

- It is ✦God's very Word to us, ✦without error, ✦without contradiction, and ✦for our eternal benefit;



furthermore, it shows us *our sin, our Savior, and the true meaning of life!* (That statement *fully* applies to God's *original* inspired Word and *generally* applies to many of today's good English translations.) (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Romans 3:20; John 5:39; 14:6; Acts 17:24-31)

How do we INTERPRET the Bible?

- There has been a *sad* and *radical* shift from one method to another over the past 200 years! Both methods consider *the historical realities of the text* (When and why it was written? By whom and for whom? Etc.) Let me briefly explain the *second word* of the two methods:
 - Historical Grammatical – A very good

and *conservative* way to interpret the Bible! **With this method we take the Bible to mean what it says**, thus we listen to God who tells us the *saving* truth!

- Historical Critical – A very *bad* and *liberal* way to interpret the Bible! Those who use this method take a *low view* of the Bible; therefore, *rather than listening to what it says*, they ask: What does it *really* mean? *Instead of God telling the truth, sinful people distort the truth!* This method has led countless church bodies to accept *abortion and homosexuality*, while denying *Jesus' miracles, the sufficiency of His saving work, His resurrection, and more* 😊!
- Another *good* and *conservative* way to interpret the Bible is to allow *Scripture to interpret Scripture!* When a passage is difficult to understand, we use the clear passages on that same subject to tell us the right meaning – *thus God tells us the answer from His Word!*

How do we APPLY the Bible?

- Christians*, people who trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life, *are 24 – 7 believers!* Therefore, whether at *church, at home, at work, or on vacation*, they have the desire, guidance, and power, from the Holy Spirit, to *read, understand, and live out* the Bible in all they *think, say, and do!* (John 6:47; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Psalm 119:105; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Galatians 2:20)

Key Similarities



Like many (*but not all*) church bodies, we believe in these *basic yet important* Bible teachings (to see these and others in more detail, see our brochure entitled *Bethlehem Basics*):

- God is Triune** – *Father, Son & Holy Spirit!*
- Sin** – *All people fell with Adam & Eve!*
- Jesus** – *The only Savior of all people!*
- Eternal Life** – *Eternity with the Triune God, the holy angels, and all believers!*

Key Differences



Because of ✦*our view of the Bible* and ✦*our method of Bible interpretation*, we have these *good, key, Bible-based* differences:

- Creation** – *By God in six literal days!* (Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Exodus 20:11)
- Original Sin** – *It left us spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God; therefore, God took action to save us!* (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 8:7)
- Means of Grace** – *Baptism and the Bible, the means through which God works to save us by uniting us to Jesus!* (Acts 2:38-39; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23)
- Justification** – *God declares us to be forgiven and just through faith in Jesus!* (John 3:16; Romans 3:20-22, 28; Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Spiritual Nourishment** – *God feeds us and keeps us in Christ through His Word!* (Philippians 1:6; Matthew 4:4)