



 FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Inclusive Grace. Contagious Love.



Believe

Trusting in God and Confessing Our Faith.

“I’m not sure I believe that,” the student said, and they continued, “I just don’t think God is like that.” Each year before the 9th grade confirmation retreat, the pastors and children, youth and family ministers have the opportunity to meet with the students and discuss their papers. We talk about their “I Believe” statements, the people who have shaped their faith, how they’ve encountered God (or not) in their lives, and their questions, doubts, and lingering wonderings. Our students are bright thinkers and deep theologians. Their questions tend to dance the line of two things, “I’ve been told I’m supposed to believe X” and “I don’t think X is who God is.” Belief can be tricky because it is often used to mean a check box or a set of statements to agree or disagree.

This summer, we’re addressing belief head on and spending our summer in a series on the Apostle’s Creed. After all, the three articles of the creed begin with belief: “I believe in God. I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in the Holy Spirit.” The Apostles’ Creed is an ancient statement of faith used by Christians for centuries to describe who God is and how God shows up in the world.

In our confession of faith, belief is not about the cognitive acceptance of a set of assertions. Belief is not a box that we check “yes” or “no.” The question is not, “Do you believe Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead? Check ‘yes’ or ‘no.’” Rather, belief is trust. To confess, “I believe in God,” is to profess, “I trust in God.” Through each article and line of the Creed, we profess, “I trust in God,” who shows up in the world in this way. Trust is relational; we trust someone or something. As Christians, we trust in God.

Martin Luther’s teaching about the Apostles’ Creed underscored both the descriptive work of God in the world and the summation of our relationship with God. In the Large Catechism, Luther said, “The Creed could be briefly condensed to these few words: ‘I believe in God the Father, who created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Spirit, who makes me holy.’”

This summer, we will dive into the Apostles’ Creed and hear scripture and sermons that tell the story of the God in whom we believe. Our summer “Believe” series will explore the Creed one line at a time, often with alternating preachers and always different scriptures between Wednesdays and Sundays. If you miss a Sunday due to travel or activities, join us on Wednesday to get caught up, and vice versa, as we move through the Creed week by week.

Each week, when we confess our faith using the Apostles’ Creed, we summarize God’s activity in the world and name who God is. This is the God in whom we trust. This is the story of the God with whom we are in relationship. This is how the God we know and trust shows up in the world.

By Pastor Katie Escalante



Wednesday Summer Worship at 6pm

Each Wednesday, we will have worship, food, and an activity, whether we are at Faith or another location. Just as our faith is not confined to the church building or property, we're taking the Believe Summer Faith Tour into our community and the surrounding area.

What to expect?

Worship will be simple with music, scripture, sermon, Apostle's Creed and prayer. Food will vary each week between food trucks, grilling, and bring your own picnic. Activities will change depending on our location and the theme for the week. Food and activities will be announced in worship, on our website and socials.

Volunteers are needed!

Angi Johnson – Activities Team Lead – help with activities and games
Marcia Bening – Music Team Lead – help with music and worship leadership
Tina Ackermann – Food Team Lead – help with food coordination, grilling and serving
Craig Antolick – Logistics Team Lead – help with setup, tear down and sound needs



I Believe in God:

Teens Leading the Creed

When Solomon Kopel was invited to serve as an Assisting Minister in one of Faith's Sunday morning worship services, he did not jump at the chance. Solomon was not convinced this leadership role would fit. Nevertheless, his mother kept bringing it up. Her persistence paid off, and eventually he gave in. On August 14, Solomon served as Assisting Minister for the first time during the 9:00 am worship service. To his surprise, he enjoyed it. "I found it fun," he said. "I don't normally like public speaking, but when it's for the church it's different."



Solomon is not alone in his assessment. Teenagers have begun regularly serving as Assisting Ministers during Sunday mornings throughout the last year. I recently sat down with Solomon (14), Mya Sannes (15), and Olivia White (16) who have all been steady in the Sunday morning rotation for a conversation.

What I discovered was that all three adolescent worship leaders experience this opportunity as one that deepens their involvement with the church. They suggested that what makes assisting in worship enjoyable is that it is an opportunity to lead.

Mya said, "It's cool for people to see that our age group is leading in the church."

Olivia responded, "I think it shows people there is a value of having young people in worship services. Younger people can do bigger roles that normally an adult would do."

On most Sundays the Assisting Ministers lead important elements of worship: the congregational prayers and the Apostles' Creed. There is a weightiness and responsibility to the role.

Solomon said, "It's still nerve-racking going up and talking, doing the Apostles' Creed and praying for people."

These young ministers are not deterred by the significance of their role. Instead, they feel an intergenerational connection with those for whom they pray even if they do not know them personally. They see the beauty in youth stepping forward and inviting the congregation to profess their belief in God through the Creed.

Reflecting on leading the Apostles' Creed, Mya said, "[Saying the Apostles' Creed] helps you to really think about what you believe in and really put words to it. I think that's a good way to acknowledge, 'O yeah, I like this part.'"

These young ministers recognize, however, that there's still room for growing within their new role. When asked what the hardest part of being an Assisting Minister was, one replied, "the mics cutting out."

Another admitted, "I struggle with reading really fast...but this has been helping me get better."

If you'd be interested in serving as an Assisting Minister, please contact Pastor Adam at adam@waconiafaithlutheran.com.

By Pastor Adam White



Olivia responded, "I think it shows people there is a value of having young people in worship services. Younger people can do bigger roles that normally an adult would do."



I Believe...

Making Faith My Own

Confirmation at Faith Lutheran is a three year sequence. In 7th and 8th grade students have two units: Lutheran Living & The Bible and the Big Questions. In 9th Grade, students do a deep dive on the Baptismal Promises and write their "I Believe" Faith Statement.

One of the big changes I have made in my time at Faith is to insist that students write papers that will be shared with their small groups. The hope is that students will be vulnerable about their experiences of faith, real about their faith in the present, and honest about the commitments they want to make in the future.

Annie Stroschein was one of three students who volunteered to read her I Believe paper during her confirmation service. She spoke eloquently about her struggle to reconcile faith and science; but she held that tension together with her meaningful experiences of worship both at church and at summer camp.

I asked if we could talk about the impact of writing that paper and sharing it with her small group and then the congregation. She said her biggest takeaway from the three years was learning to be ok with her own questions, and not having all the answers. "We kept saying that God always forgives us. And I realized that God is in my thoughts, so there isn't any question I can ask about faith that it's wrong for me to have."

When I wondered if it was something we learned in confirmation that helped her get there, she had two separate answers. "Not really." She said at first. "It was more that because I had to turn a paper in, I started talking about all my questions at home, especially with my older brother." She made a joke about "Being the one to say what everyone else was thinking," but I sensed something deeper: "It sounds like it was really scary for you to have some of these questions?"

She said it really was. "My brother got confirmed first, and my parents are both really committed to the church. I thought if I really shared what I was questioning, people would think I wasn't a Christian. But the more we talked about it as a family, the more I found out that we all pretty much agreed." The leadership she showed at home, she also showed in her small group, where she said members of her group thanked her for her paper, for being honest about the doubts they had but didn't want to write.



Annie kept coming back to one word when we talked: abiding. "I just got so much from all the times we would sit in the quiet, in the dark or the candlelight in confirmation. That's where I learned that God is in my thoughts. This was my time, to be with myself, to really feel and figure out my faith on my own."

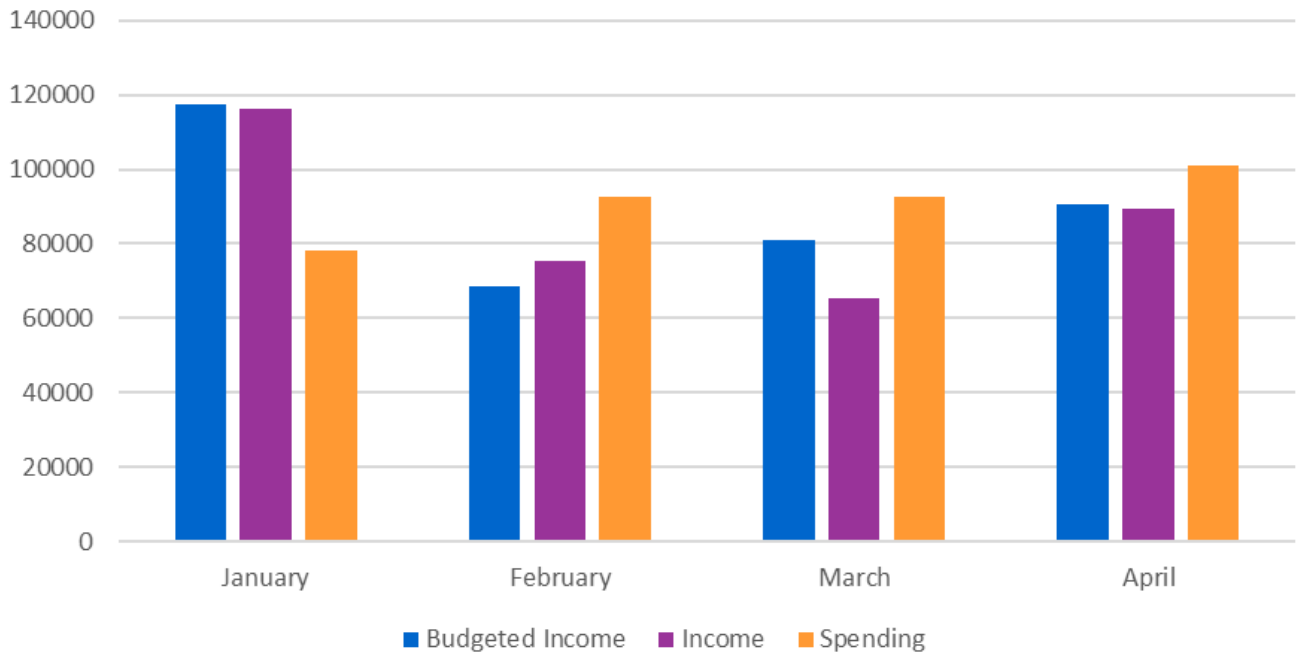
I had prepped her with a question about the difference between science as head knowledge, and heart as faith knowledge, and before we finished she told me she had a metaphor for me: "You need both. The brain needs oxygen, which it gets from the blood that the heart is always pumping. But the heart can't pump without the signals it gets from the brain." Her honest assessment of her I Believe statement was that "writing my paper – I got to name the things I struggle with. But what it did was helped me see how much I really do believe."

After the confirmation service, Annie has said she is looking forward to trying out the role of Assisting Minister in a service. She has talked with her dad (the drummer for PrimeTime) and Pastor Adam about what a youth worship band might look like. If every student at Faith has their version of this experience - talking with their family, engaging their small group, and finding out what they really love and believe about faith – then we can be confident not only about our confirmation program, but also the future of the church.

Financial Update

Through the first four months of the year:
we've spent \$3,290 less than we planned to spend,
and we've received \$11,274 less than we planned to receive.

2023 Monthly Giving vs. Spending



Income as shown does not include \$85,916 from the Employee Retention Tax Credit the church received this fiscal year.



Pastor Adam White
adam@waconiafaithlutheran.com



Pastor Katie Escalante
katie@waconiafaithlutheran.com



Shane Marcus, Youth & Family Minister
shane@waconiafaithlutheran.com

Come Worship with us!

Summer Sundays @ 9am
Summer Wednesdays @ 6pm
www.waconiafaithlutheran.com
952-442-2101



COMING THIS SUMMER...



BELIEVE

SUMMER FAITH TOUR



- MAY 31 BELIEVE - FAITH LUTHERAN
- JUNE 7 CREATOR - CARLSON'S LLAMA FARM
- JUNE 14 SON - FAITH LUTHERAN
- JUNE 21 CONCEIVED & BORN - FAITH LUTHERAN
- JUNE 28 SUFFERED - REDEEMER LUTHERAN
- JULY 5 CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED - FAITH LUTHERAN
- JULY 12 DESCENDED - FAITH LUTHERAN
- JULY 19 ROSE AGAIN - CITY SQUARE PARK
- JULY 26 ASCENDED - FAITH LUTHERAN
- AUGUST 2 JUDGE - FAITH LUTHERAN
- AUGUST 9 CHURCH - FAITH LUTHERAN
- AUGUST 16 COMMUNION OF SAINTS - RUTZ LAKE CEMETERY
- AUGUST 23 FORGIVENESS - FAITH LUTHERAN
- AUGUST 30 RESURRECTION & LIFE EVERLASTING - SCHRAM VINEYARDS

INCLUSIVE GRACE. CONTAGIOUS LOVE.

6PM // WEDNESDAYS MAY 31 - AUGUST 30

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
800 Waconia Parkway North
Waconia, MN 55387