

Living the Essentials

Being the church in the twenty-first century calls us to new challenges and demands greater commitment and understanding of our faith and action. For Moravians, Christianity is grounded in the living experience of faith in Christ, active love for others, and joyful hope. We believe that this living relationship with Christ is born and nurtured in local faith communities, in relationship with and in service to one another and the world.

According to the Ancient Unity, founded in 1457, the New Testament tells us clearly what is essential: **faith, love, and hope**. Everything the church does should be for the purpose of building people up in faith, in love, and in hope.

A generation later, the Moravians further refined this belief as two essential teachings: First, **the essential works of God** are creation, redemption (salvation), and sanctification (or blessing). Second, **the ways we respond** to God's work are faith, love, and hope. God's work comes before our response, but the work of God and our response are both essential.



Six elements make up these two essentials:

- **God's grace:** God creates, God saves, God blesses; and
- **Our response:** We respond in faith, love, and hope. We have faith in what God has done and is doing; we love God, love ourselves, love our neighbors and love our enemies; and we face the future with hope because God is with us and we are with God now and forever.

The Moravians of the Renewed Church in the eighteenth century talked about these essentials differently, though their life together still demonstrated the presence of **God's grace** and **their response**. After the spiritual renewal of August 13, 1727, they emphasized their deep commitment to an individual, intimate relationship with Christ and their belief that this relationship is expressed in community. This profound experience of Christian community led our brothers and sisters to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those most marginalized throughout the world.

And so the wisdom of the Scriptures and the faithful example of the Ancient Unity and the Renewed Church provide a way to understand our Christian experience today. God creates; God redeems; God blesses. And we respond in faith, in love, and in hope. Everything else in the church should be grounded in these essentials: whether studying Scripture or baptizing babies; whether feeding the hungry or raising money for mission; whether serving our neighbors or caring for each other; whether profound sermons or quiet prayer; whether agreeing or disagreeing. We should be, individually and together, living the essentials!

Here's another way to look at the *Living the Essentials* model:

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God's Actions	God creates us	God saves us	God blesses us
Our Response	Faith	Love	Hope
Our Lives	Spiritual Growth	Community & Relationship	Mission & Service