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WHAT<sup>®</sup>  
LUTHERANS  
BELIEVE



The LCMS operates a university system of 10 campuses around the nation, and two seminaries to prepare pastors and missionaries. The LCMS presently does missionary work in approximately 60 different nations.

Currently there are about 90 Lutheran High Schools scattered throughout the United States. The majority of these high schools are formed by associations of local congregations to provide Lutheran secondary education for their young people. Many congregations of the synod operate day schools, preschools, and day care centers.



## THE FOUNDATION

The entire Bible is the inerrant word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and completely truthful and reliable. Other writings are valid for faith and ethics only when they accurately reflect and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.

The central message of the Bible is free and complete forgiveness of all sin by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The central purpose of the Bible is to bring people to faith in Him.

## WHAT DO LUTHERANS BELIEVE, TEACH, AND CONFESS?

Three main points summarize clearly:

### 1. GRACE ALONE

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*  
*Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)*

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified (declared righteous) by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

*Romans 3:23-24 (ESV)*

**Grace alone** is the biblical teaching that our salvation has been won for us completely and solely by God's grace through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## 2. FAITH ALONE

*For we maintain that a person is justified (declared righteous) by faith apart from the works of the law.*

*Romans 3:28 (NIV)*

*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.*

*Philippians 3:8-9 (ESV)*

**Faith alone** is the biblical teaching that proclaims a person is justified before God, and therefore saved, solely through faith in Jesus Christ.

## 3. SCRIPTURE ALONE

*Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

*Proverbs 30:5 (NIV)*

*So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

*John 8:31-32 (ESV)*

*traditions. These tried and true liturgies not only give order to worship, but more importantly keep the church faithful to the Word of God with the primary focus on Jesus Christ and the Gospel.*

*Worship (broad) includes devotions, Bible Study, prayer, service opportunities, special dress, etc.*

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Lutherans were the original Protestant Christians. The German pastor and professor named Martin Luther started the Reformation 500 years ago, reintroducing the central truths of the Bible to Christians. Lutheran teachings reach back to the truth of what the Church has always taught concerning the Christian faith. The Lutheran Church bears the name of Martin Luther solely because it stands firmly on God's Word as the only source and norm for Christian faith and life. This was the foundation upon which Luther lived and taught.**

**In 1847, a group of Saxon immigrants settled in Perry County, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi River. These immigrants, together with Lutherans from Michigan and elsewhere, helped form what has become known as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Wendish immigrants and other Lutherans in Lee County and other parts of central Texas quickly joined the LCMS in its early years.**

**Congregations joining hands together as part of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are found throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.**

*Because Jesus commanded His Church to baptize all nations (Matthew 28:19), even infants and little children can receive the benefits God bestows.*

*Lutherans accept all modes of baptism as valid, when water is applied in the name of the Triune God.*

*The **LORD'S SUPPER** not only remembers all that Jesus has done for our salvation, but it is the reception of Christ's true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.*

*Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

*Matthew 26:26-28 (ESV)*

*Lutherans also believe that reception of the Lord's Supper not only implies but is confession of unity and faith.*

***Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.***

*I Corinthians 10:17 (ESV)*

#### 9. *Worship*

*Worship is defined as gathering to receive the means of grace and respond with acts of praise (narrow) and activities that directly strengthen Christian faith and give honor and obedience to God (broad).*

*Worship (narrow) includes confession and forgiveness, reading and proclaiming God's Word, prayer and praise and often the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Typically, Lutheran worship follows historic*

***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.***

*II Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)*

**Scripture alone** is the biblical teaching that God's written Word, the Bible, is the source and norm for everything that Christians believe, teach, and confess.

*Every other truth of Scripture is related to these three. Therefore, Lutherans also believe, teach and confess:*

#### 1. *God*

*The God of the Bible is the only true God. He reveals Himself as Triune; that is, He is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We confess the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, three ancient statements of belief that profess the truth concerning the Holy Trinity.*

#### 2. *Creation*

*God created everything that exists. His creating acts were accomplished in six days as recorded in Genesis chapter one. He not only created all things, but also continues to sustain and provide for every living creature.*

#### 3. *Mankind*

*The human race is the crown of God's creation. Originally people were holy, pure, and righteous. Mankind was created in the image of God, that is, with knowledge and belief in God, and living a life that was completely God-pleasing.*

4. Sin

*The parents of all humanity (Adam and Eve) rebelled against God and brought sin into all the world. Since then, all people are conceived and born sinful, sin daily, and cannot save themselves.*

5. Jesus Christ

*By rebelling against God all people deserve eternal punishment. But, God is love. In His love, He sent His only-begotten Son to die for the sins for the world. Jesus fulfilled God's Law perfectly and then died on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for all sin. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. People can only be saved through faith in Him.*

***For God so loved the world that he have his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him..***

*John 3:16-17 (NIV)*

6. Resurrection

*Jesus bodily rose from the dead. His resurrection is our guarantee that complete victory has been won for us over sin, death, and the power of the devil. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again at the end of time to judge both those living and those who have died. Believers will go with Him to heaven. Unbelievers will be separated from Him forever.*

***Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

*John 11:25-26 (ESV)*

7. Holy Spirit

*The Holy Spirit is truly God. The Holy Spirit works through His Word and Sacraments to bring people to faith in Jesus and enable them to love as He has first loved us.*

8. Means of Grace

*The specific means through which the Holy Spirit works are **WORD** (Bible and proclamation of the Gospel) and **SACRAMENTS** (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).*

***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***

*Romans 1:16 (ESV)*

***In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world- just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.***

*Colossians 1:6 (NIV)*

*The Sacraments are not merely symbols, but they truly offer and bestow spiritual blessings to those who receive them in faith.*

***BAPTISM*** is water connected with God's Word that promises, offers, and bestows forgiveness.

***Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.***

*1 Peter 3:21 (ESV)*