

A Brief Overview of the Lutheran Faith

Even though the Lutheran Church, worldwide, is the second largest Christian church (the Roman Catholic is the largest), we recognize that the Lutheran church is not that familiar to everyone. Therefore, we are happy to share this brief overview of the Lutheran faith.

Introductory thought: First and foremost, we are a Christian church. Although we are named after Martin Luther (1483-1546), there is really no such thing as a “Lutheran” doctrine. Luther’s contribution was not to formulate new teachings, or beliefs, but simply to return to the teachings of the early Christian Church as recorded for us in the Bible. We might summarize it this way: “All Lutheran teachings are Christian teachings and all Christian teachings are Lutheran teachings.” Specifically, we believe:

- In the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- That Jesus Christ is true God from all eternity and also true man since the time he “was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary”.
- That Jesus, as both true God and true man, lived a sinless life and then died a death he did not deserve (crucifixion) to pay for our sins so that we might be rescued from the eternal punishment of hell and enjoy the perfect happiness of heaven.
- That we receive this forgiveness as a gift of God through faith (trusting in Jesus as our Savior).
- That our love for this gift of forgiveness, won by Jesus, will prompt us to do good works as expressed in the Ten Commandments.
- That the mission of the church is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the entire world.
- That baptism is a sacrament through which the Holy Spirit conveys the gift of faith and forgiveness, even to infants.
- That the Lord’s Supper is a sacrament in which, together with the bread and wine, we receive the true body and true blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- That confession, repentance, and good works are proofs that a person has genuine love and faith for Jesus in his heart.
- That Jesus, by removing our sins, has also removed God’s anger against us.
- That, through Jesus, we can now pray directly to God with our prayers of petition, repentance, and praise. We firmly believe that our heavenly Father hears our prayers and, according to his perfect knowledge, answers them in the time and manner that is best for us.
- We believe that when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ as his/her Savior, all former sins are not only forgiven, they are forgotten.

If you come to one of our worship services, you will see us do the following things:

- We will open our service in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- As a congregation, we will confess our sins to God and hear that our sins have been forgiven in Christ.
- We will read and explain section from the Bible (the gospel and epistle reading for that Sunday).
- We will confess together our Christian faith according to either the Apostles’ or the Nicene Creed.
- We will apply the truths of God Word to our daily lives through a sermon.
- We will pray together the Lord’s Prayer.
- We will offer our “first fruits” (our offering) to the Lord.
- We will praise the Lord with hymns.
- We will close the service with the blessing.

Finally, the Lutheran church is divided into three main groups or synods. Even though we still have a common name (Lutheran), we no longer have common beliefs. We are a “conservative” Lutheran church in the sense that we still believe that the Bible is unerring Word of God, that it is the responsibility of the church to teach the Bible, and it is our responsibility to live according to it.