

# What Is a



# Lutheran?

*A Guide to  
Lutheran Beliefs, History, and Teachings*



*A Lutheran is a Christian—someone who trusts Jesus as Savior.*



*Lutherans share a common faith with other Christians.*

## They accept:

The Bible as the one true source of Christian love, guidance and teaching; The same ancient creeds (the Apostle's, etc.).

### 1. Apostles' Creed

This is the oldest summary of Christian belief. It tells the basic principles of the Bible. It's used for general confession and religious teachings.

### 2. Nicene Creed

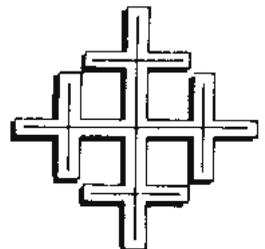
It states basic beliefs about God: that God is TRIUNE—three persons in one. It also tells about God's works in the world.

### 3. Athanasian Creed

It summarizes the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It emphasizes the importance of Christ, who is true God and true human in one person.



Lutheran Church  
Christian Unity



**LUTHERANISM TEACHES THAT A PERSON IS SAVED ONLY  
BY THE GRACE OF GOD  
THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST.**

**Lutherans stress:**

- **Justification by faith** (that we are forgiven for our sins and given a relationship with God only by the faith God gives).
- That a person is not to live according to a formula of do's and don'ts, but in the freedom of **Christian love**.
- The two basic teachings of the Bible are the **Gospel** (that which shows us our Savior and what He has done for us) and the **Law** (that which shows our sin and our need for repentance).
- Belief in **all** that Jesus Christ has done **for us**.
- **Faith in Jesus Christ**: a relationship with God our Father, which is strengthened by the Holy Spirit.
- **Repentance**: acknowledging sinfulness and need for a Savior.
- **Seeking/knowing the Lord** through the teachings of the Bible and living a life of love through Jesus Christ.

*God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.*

*1 Timothy 2:3-6*

# THE LUTHERAN CHURCH TEACHES THAT:



The **BIBLE** is the Word of God—absolute truth. Its history and fulfilled promises show God in action.

The **SAVIOR**, Jesus, died to save the world from sin and to bring us back into His loving arms.

**GOD** is one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

The **CHURCH** is all those people who have been given the gift of faith and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

A **CHRISTIAN'S UNITY** with fellow Christians is rooted in Christ and God and Savior. Fellowship is based on agreement in teachings.

**MAN** and **WOMAN** were created by God in holiness, but were tempted by Satan and sinned. God promised to send His Son for the forgiveness of sins.

**THE SPIRIT OF EVIL** is an angel called Satan, Lucifer or other names. He is a real power opposing God, but a creation like other angels. He has been defeated by Jesus.

A person is **JUSTIFIED** (saved), not through merit, but only by God's grace, through faith.

**FAITH** is a gift from God, born of Word and sacrament. It brings a trust in Christ as Lord and Savior. The gift of faith gives eternal life and salvation

**SINS** are the failures of people to live their lives in trust toward God. They are evidenced in thoughts, words, and deeds. We are by nature sinful and cannot help ourselves.

**PRAYER** is a Christian's sharing of thought with God—communication with God.

**REPENTING** means sincerely regretting one's sins and acknowledging that we need God to save us.



The **GOSPEL** shows us our Savior Jesus. It offers grace to every one and will save those who are brought through the Holy Spirit to believe in its promises.



**GOD'S LAW** shows us what God loves and what he hates. Only through the Gospel can we be saved.

The **LORD'S SUPPER**, a sacrament, is the Body and Blood of Christ borne by bread and wine. It is a time for acknowledging sin and receiving God's gift of forgiveness.



**BAPTISM**, a sacrament, is a means of grace and salvation, and establishes new life in a person. Lutherans baptize babies as well as adults.

**CONVERSION** (spiritual rebirth) is a God wrought bestowal of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.



**SANCTIFICATION** is the state of growing in divine grace as a result of Christian commitment to serving our Savior after baptism or conversion.

**MARRIAGE** is an institution given by God and intended to last for a lifetime. Marriage should be modeled after Christ's love for us.



**DEATH** does not sever a believer's relationship with Christ. It is not natural, but brought about by sin. Death has been conquered by Jesus.

**CHURCH and STATE** are separate. God has made the state to preserve order so that the church can carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The State serves the Church in this way, most often without knowing it.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** of the young is the responsibility of home and church.



The **CREEDS** are statements of belief, not additions to the Bible. They summarize the Bible's teaching.

**RELIGION** and **SCIENCE** are not in conflict. Religion talks about the "who"—the Creator; Science talks about the "how."

# The Lutheran Church is a confessional church.

They believe a certain body of Biblical teachings included in a group of works, which include: the three creeds (the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed* and the *Athanasian Creed*) and the Lutheran Confessions which include: the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalkald Articles, the Formula of Concord, and Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. The confessions are accurate interpretations of the Word of God written to correct church errors.

## Confessions

1. **Augsburg Confession** stresses the doctrine of SALVATION BY GRACE through faith in Christ as the center of the Christian faith, and the importance of the Bible and Christian doctrines in Christian religion. It also testifies against the abuses of the medieval church which Luther sought to correct.
2. **Apology of the Augsburg Confession** gives an explanation of the Augsburg Confession and a defense against enemies who would destroy the church.

*The confessions are accurate interpretations of the Word of God written to correct church errors.*

3. **Smalcald Articles**—Martin Luther's "last will and testament"—states the doctrine of the Trinity and Deity of Christ. It also emphasizes the central doctrine of Christianity: "we are saved only through faith in Christ."
4. **Formula of Concord**—written to unify the church, which had been disorganized for 30 years—officially approves all the earlier Lutheran confessions.
5. **Luther's small and Large Catechisms** seek to explain God's Law, the Gospel, Lord's Prayer, Baptism, the Lord's Supper.



## History

Lutheranism had its beginnings in 1517, when Martin Luther (*not Martin Luther King*), a doctor of theology and a monk in the Roman Catholic Church, publicly called for the correction of errors in the medieval church. Luther was a pastor, professor, author, composer of hymns and reformer. He sought to return the Church back to the Bible as the sole source of its teaching. Only when the leaders of the Church would not listen and removed him from the church did he form a separate group that was first known as “Protestants” and then known as “Lutherans.” Luther is respected but not worshipped.

## How do Lutherans worship?

- “ Generally Lutherans worship with a liturgical format. There is a call for God’s presence, a confession of sins, a praise song, readings from the Word, a sermon, prayer, the Lord’s Supper and a blessing—all to keep the focus on what Christ has done for us.
- “ A Lutheran service presents the Word in an orderly and purposeful manner that follows the church calendar.
- “ Attending church services regularly helps strengthen one’s faith.
- “ Lutherans believe that God is really present for His people in Word and Sacrament.

## How can someone become a member of a Lutheran church?

- “ By confirmation -- the youth (6th and 7th grade) have a class that meets regularly during the school year.
- “ Adults can attend a class given by the pastor which teaches the basics of the Christian faith and the specific beliefs of the Lutherans.

**JOIN US  
FOR WORSHIP  
at  
GOOD SHEPHERD  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

***“Bringing  
Jesus Christ***



***to your  
heart and  
home”***

**Sunday School - 9:15 a.m.  
Sunday Service - 10:30 a.m.**

**425 Patchen Dr.  
Lexington KY 40517  
Phone: 269-6517**