

Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations



Definition of Confessional Lutheranism In Light of Present Day Issues

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The references from the Lutheran Confessions include some words or passages from the German 1580 or Latin 1584 edition, these are set apart with < >.

Record of Document Updates

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Introduction

The following is intended for discussion purposes in the hope of bringing about meaningful dialogue and healing within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It is not intended to be an exhaustive definition of Confessional Lutheranism, but to address those specific issues which have become matters of contention among us. Additionally, the term “Confessional” has been misused as a pejorative or caricature of otherwise faithful Lutheran pastors and laymen, and this document seeks to correct the unfortunate use of an honorable description applied to honorable people in a dishonorable way.

To be sure, a more complete understanding of Confessional Lutheranism is found in the Book of Concord, 1580. Additionally, it is acknowledged that it is a life-long desire to believe, teach, confess and live as Confessional Lutherans and that such a goal is never fully achieved in this life but is constantly the object of our striving.

Finally, this definition is provided to the Church and Synod in order to lift up the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation He brings to fallen, sinful mankind. This document is offered in a spirit of Christian unity and peace among Lutherans so that with united voice we may, “...stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.” Philippians 1:27-28b.



Confessional Lutheranism holds fervently to the Holy Scriptures as the written, inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God in all things they address and embraces a *quia* (“because” the Confessions are a correct exposition of the teachings of Scripture, not *quatenus* – that is only “in so far as” the Confessions are in accord with Scripture) subscription to the Lutheran Symbols or Confessions as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580.

Marks of the Church

This faith is marked by pastors and laymen who:

1. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, hold that The Marks of the Church are:

- a. The Word of God taught in all its truth and purity.
- b. The Sacraments administered in accord with Christ’s institution.

Where these marks are seen, there Christians will find the True Visible Church on Earth. These marks are visible precisely so that Christians will know what Church to join, and so that blood-bought souls may have the certainty of salvation.



References:

Matthew 26:26-28: ²⁶Now 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." ²⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 16:15-16: ¹⁵And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Luke 22:19-20: ¹⁹And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.^l

Luke 24:27: ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

John 3:4-15: ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus said to him. "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^l

John 20:23, 31: ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 2:38-39: ³⁸And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone^(l) whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Acts 22:16: ¹⁶And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Romans 8:10: ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Romans 10:17: ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

I John 1:3-4: ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Augsburg Confession V (The Ministry): [1] So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. [2] Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news [3] that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ's sake.

[4] Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.

Augsburg Confession XIII (The Use of the Sacraments): [1] Our churches teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but even more, to be signs and testimonies of God's will toward us. [2] They were instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Therefore, we must use the Sacraments in such a way that faith, which believes the promises offered and set forth through the Sacraments, is increased [2 Thessalonians 1:3].

[3] Therefore, they condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify simply by the act of doing them. They condemn those who do not teach that faith, which believes that sins are forgiven, is required in the use of the Sacraments.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II (Free Will or Human Powers):

[50] Out of His immense goodness and mercy, God provides for the public preaching of His divine eternal Law and only saving Gospel of His eternal Son, our only Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. By this preaching He gathers an eternal Church for Himself from the human race and works in people's hearts true repentance, knowledge of sins, and true faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. By this means, and in no other way (i.e., through His holy Word, when people hear it preached or read it, and through the holy Sacraments when they are used according to His Word), God desires to call people to eternal salvation. He desires to draw them to Himself and convert, regenerate, and sanctify them.

[53] A person can hear and read this Word outwardly, even though he is not yet converted to God and regenerate. As said above, a person even since the fall has a free will to a certain extent in these outward things. So he can go to church and listen or not listen to the sermon.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII (VII) (The Number and Use of the Sacraments):

[1] In Article XIII, the adversaries approve our statement that the Sacraments are not just marks of profession among people, as some imagine. Rather, they are signs and testimonies of God's will toward us. Through them God moves hearts to believe. [2] But here they ask us to count seven Sacraments. We hold that the matters and ceremonies instituted in the Scriptures, whatever the number, should not be neglected. Neither do we believe it to be of any consequence. However, for teaching purposes, different people do count differently, provided they still rightly keep the matters handed down in Scripture. The ancients also did not count in the same way.

[3] If we call Sacraments "rites that have the command of God, and to which the promise of grace has been added," it is easy to decide what are true sacraments. For rites instituted by human beings will not be called true Sacraments; For human authority cannot promise grace. Therefore, signs set up without God's command are not sure signs of grace, even though signs perhaps instruct the unlearned or admonish about something. [4] Therefore, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution (which is the Sacrament of Repentance) are truly Sacraments. For these rites have God's command and the promise of grace, which is peculiar to the New Testament. When we are baptized, when eat the Lord's body, when we are absolved, our hearts must be firmly assured that God truly forgives us for Christ's sake. [5] At the same time, by the Word and by the rite, God moves hearts to believe and conceive faith, just as Paul says "Faith comes from hearing" (Romans 10:17). But just as the Word enters the ear in order to strike our heart, so the rite itself strikes the eye, in order to move the heart. The effect of the Word and of the rite is the same. It has been well said by Augustine that a Sacrament is a visible Word, because the rite is received by the eyes and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, illustrating the same thing as the Word. The result of both is the same.

[6] Confirmation and extreme unction are rites received from the Fathers that not even the Church requires as necessary to salvation, because they do not have God's command. Therefore, it is useful to distinguish these rites from the former, which have God's direct command and a clear promise of grace.

[7] The adversaries understand priesthood not about the ministry of the Word, and giving out the Sacraments to others, but as referring to sacrifice. This is as though there should be a priesthood like the Levitical one [Leviticus 8-9] to sacrifice for the people and merit the forgiveness of sins for others in the New Testament. [8] We teach that the sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross has been enough for the sins of the whole world. There is no need for other sacrifices, as though Christ's sacrifice were not enough for our sins. So people are justified not because of any other Sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ, if they believe that they have been redeemed by this sacrifice. [9] So they are called priests, not in order to make any sacrifices for the people as in the Law, that by these they may merit forgiveness of sins for the people. Rather, they are called to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments to the people. [10] Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches well enough [Hebrews 8]. [11] But if ordination is understood as carrying out the ministry of the Word, we are willing to call ordination a Sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and has glorious promises, "The gospel... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Likewise, "So shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose" (Isaiah 55:11). [12] If ordination is understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the laying on of hands a Sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in the ministry <that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men>. [13] It is helpful, so far as can be done, to honor the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical people. These fanatics imagine that the Holy Spirit is given not through the Word, but through certain preparations of their own. For example, they imagine He is given if they sit unoccupied and silent in far-off places, waiting for illumination, as the Enthusiasts formerly taught and the Anabaptists now teach.

[14] Marriage was not first instituted in the New Testament, but in the beginning, immediately after the creation of the human race [Genesis 1:28]. Furthermore, it has God's command. It has also promises, not truly having to do with the New Testament, but rather having to do with bodily life. Therefore, if anyone wishes to call it a Sacrament, he or she should still distinguish it from those preceding ones. They are truly signs of the New Testament and testimonies of grace and the forgiveness of sins. [15] But if marriage has the name "Sacrament" because it has God's command, other states or offices also, which have God's command, may be called Sacraments, as, for example, the government.

[16] Finally, if among the Sacraments everything should be numbered that has God's command, and to which promises have been added, why do we not add prayer, which most truly can be called a Sacrament? For it has both God's command and very many promises. If numbered among the Sacraments, although in a more prominent place, it would encourage people to pray. [17] Alms could also be counted here and, likewise, troubles. These are themselves signs to which God has added promises. But let us leave out these things. For no levelheaded person will labor greatly about the number or the term, if only those things are still kept that have God's command and promises.

[18] It is more important to understand how the Sacraments are to be used. Here we condemn the whole crowd of scholastic doctors, who teach that the Sacraments give grace by the outward act (*ex opere operate*), without a good frame of mind on the part of the one using them, provided he does not place a hindrance in the way. This is absolutely a Jewish opinion, to hold that we are justified by a ceremony, without a good tendency of the heart, that is, without faith. Yet this ungodly and deadly opinion is taught with great authority throughout the entire realm of the pope. [19] Paul contradicts this, and denies (Romans 4:9) that Abraham was justified by circumcision. He asserts that circumcision was an illustration presented for exercising faith. So we teach that in the use of the Sacraments, *faith* should be added. Faith should believe these promises and receive the promised things offered in the Sacrament. [20] The reason is plain and thoroughly grounded. The promise is useless unless it is received by faith. The Sacraments are the signs of the promises. Therefore, faith should be added in the use of the Sacraments. If anyone uses the Lord's Supper, he should use it by faith. This is a Sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says (Luke 22:20). For this very reason he should be confident that the free forgiveness of sins promis-

ed in the New Testament is offered. Let him receive this by faith, let him comfort his alarmed conscience and know that these testimonies are not false. They are as sure as I though <and still surer than if> God by a new miracle would declare from heaven that it was His will to grant forgiveness. What advantage would these miracles and promises be to an unbeliever? [21] Here we speak of special faith that believes the present promise that the forgiveness of sins is offered. [22] This use of the Sacrament consoles godly and alarmed minds. We are not speaking of a faith that only in general believes that God exists.

[23] It is beyond words what abuses the fanatical opinion about outward works (*opus operatum*) has produced in the Church (without a good disposition on the part of the one using the Sacraments). From it has come the endless profanation of the Masses. We shall speak about this later. A single letter cannot be produced from the old writers that supports the Scholastics in this matter. On the contrary, Augustine says the faith that uses the Sacrament, and not the Sacrament, justifies. And the declaration of Paul is well-known, "With the heart one believes and is justified" (Romans 10:10).

Justification by Faith

2. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, hold with the Augsburg Confession:

“Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in his sight.” (Augsburg Confession Article IV (Justification), Dau/Bente)

Since the doctrine of justification is the central doctrine of the Christian faith, any equivocation or error in any doctrine of the faith weakens and obfuscates this central article on which the Church stands or falls. Therefore, it is contended such equivocation respecting the following articles of the faith is a direct attack on the central doctrine and is detrimental to Christian souls and to the faith we believe, teach, and confess.



References:

Romans 1:16-17: ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Romans 3:19-27: ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

Romans 4:3-5: ³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Galatians 1:6-7, 15-16: ⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

Ephesians 2:8-10: ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workman-

ship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,¹ which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Hebrews 9:25-28: ²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Augsburg Confession IV (Justification): ¹ Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. ² People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. ³ God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4 [3:21–26; 4:5]).

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (Justification):

² But in this controversy, the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated. When it is understood correctly, it illumines and amplifies Christ's honor «which is especially useful for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible». It brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences. Therefore, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with patience in matters of such importance.

⁵ All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two principal topics: the Law and the promises. For in some places Scripture presents the Law, and in others the promises about Christ. In other words, in the Old Testament, Scripture promises that Christ will come, and it offers, for His sake, the forgiveness of sins, justification, and life eternal.

⁵³ Whenever we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects belong together: the promise, grace, and Christ's merits as the price and atonement. The promise is received through faith. Grace excludes our merits and means that the benefit is offered only through mercy. Christ's merits are the price, because there must be a certain atonement for our sins. ⁵⁴ Scripture frequently cries out for mercy; the Holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. ⁵⁵ Therefore, whenever mercy is mentioned, we must keep in mind that faith, which receives the promise of mercy, is required there. Again, whenever we speak about faith, we want an object of faith to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. ⁵⁶ For faith justifies and saves, not because it is a worthy work in itself, but only because it receives the promised mercy.

Smalcald Articles Part II (The Articles that Refer to the Office and Work of Jesus Christ; that is, Our Redemption), Article I (The Chief Article)

⁵ Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls [Mark 13:31].

“For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
(Acts 4:12)

“And with His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.

Formula of Concord Epitome, Article III (The Righteousness Of Faith Before God):

¹⁰ We believe, teach, and confess that it is necessary to teach with special diligence the *particulae exclusivae* for the preservation of the pure doctrine about the righteousness of faith before God. We mean the *exclusive particles*, that is, the following words of the holy apostle Paul, by which Christ's merit is entirely separated from our works and the honor is given to Christ alone. For the holy apostle Paul writes, “Of grace,” “without merit,” “without Law,” “without

works,” of works.” All these words together mean that we are justified and saved through faith alone in Christ [Ephesians 2:8; Romans 1:17; 3:24; 4:3–25; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 11].

Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Article III (The Righteousness of Faith before God) [6-17] Justification by Faith:

⁶ This article about justification by faith (as the Apology says) is the chief article [See AP IV 2-3] in all Christian doctrine. Without this teaching no poor conscience can have any firm consolation or truly know the riches of Christ’s grace. Dr. Luther also has written about this: If this one teaching stands in its purity, then Christendom will also remain pure and good, undivided and unseparated; for this alone, and nothing else, makes and maintains Christendom... Where this falls, it is impossible to ward off any error or sectarian spirit.

⁷ Paul says especially about this article, “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” [1 Corinthians 5:6]. Therefore, in this article he zealously and earnestly urges the use of exclusive terms [*particulars exclusivas*], that is, words that exclude people’s works from justification (i.e., “apart from works of the law,” “apart from works,” “by grace” [Romans 3:28; 4:6; Ephesians 2:8–9]). These show how highly necessary it is that in this article, along with the pure doctrine, the antithesis (i.e., all contrary doctrine) be stated separately, exposed, and rejected by this method.

⁸ We want to explain this controversy in a Christian way by means of God’s Word, and settle it by His grace. Therefore, this is our doctrine, faith, and confession:

⁹ We unanimously believe, teach, and confess the following about the righteousness of faith before God, in accordance with the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession presented above. A poor sinful person is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and is adopted into sonship and inheritance of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own. This happens without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone. His obedience is credited to us for righteousness.

¹⁰ These treasures are brought to us by the Holy Spirit in the promise of the Holy Gospel. Faith alone is the only means through which we lay hold on, accept, apply, and take them for ourselves. ¹¹ This faith is God’s gift [Ephesians 2:8–9], by which we truly learn to know Christ, our Redeemer, in the Word of the Gospel and trust in Him. We trust that for the sake of His obedience alone we have the forgiveness of sins by grace, are regarded as godly and righteous by God the Father, and are eternally saved. ¹² Therefore, it is considered and understood to be the same thing when Paul says (a) we are “justified by faith” (Romans 3:28) or (b) “faith is counted as righteousness” (Romans 4:5) and when he says (c) “by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19) or (d) “so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (Romans 5:18). ¹³ Faith justifies not because it is such a good work or because it is so beautiful a virtue. It justifies because it lays hold of and accepts Christ’s merit in the promise of the Holy Gospel. For this merit must be applied and become ours through faith, if we are to be justified by it. ¹⁴ Therefore, the righteousness that is credited to faith or to the believer out of pure grace is Christ’s obedience, suffering, and resurrection, since He has made satisfaction for us to the Law and paid for ‘expiated’ our sins. ¹⁵ Christ is not man alone, but God and man in one undivided person. Therefore, He was hardly subject to the Law (because He is the Lord of the Law), just as He didn’t have to suffer and die for His own sake. For this reason, then, His obedience (not only in His suffering and dying, but also because He was voluntarily made under the Law in our place and fulfilled the Law by this obedience) is credited to us for righteousness. So, because of this complete obedience, which He rendered to His heavenly Father for us by doing and suffering and in living and dying, God forgives our sins. He regards us as godly and righteous, and He eternally saves us. ¹⁶ This righteousness is brought to us by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and in the Sacraments. It is applied, taken, and received through faith. Therefore, believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, God’s grace, sonship, and are heirs of eternal life.

¹⁷ The word *justify* here means to declare righteous and free from sins and to absolve a person from eternal punishment for the sake of Christ’s righteousness, which is credited by God to faith

(Philippians 3:9). This use and understanding of this word is common in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament.

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD. (Proverbs 17:15)

[Woe to those] who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! (Isaiah 5:23)
Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies [that is, absolves from sins and acquits]. (Romans 8:33)

The Pastoral Office

3. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, hold that there is one divinely instituted, divinely mandated pastoral office in the Church and that this office is not occupied by every member of the congregation but by those men well prepared for it and properly called to it. Therefore, any public proclamation of God's Word in worship should and ought to be done only by such pastors called to the task. We reject as unbiblical the post-Christian trend in some denominations to allow homosexual and female clergy. Confessional Lutherans affirm the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and encourage Christians to practice this priesthood in their homes and vocations but it is not to be confused with the office of pastor in the Church.



References:

Matthew 16:18-19: ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock¹ I will build my church, and the gates of hell¹ shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Acts 14:23: ²³And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5: ⁵This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—

Smalcald Articles X (Ordination and the Call): [1] If the bishops would be true bishops and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, we might grant them to ordain and confirm us and our preachers. This would be for the sake of love and unity, but not because it was necessary. However, they would have to give up all comedies and spectacular display of unchristian parade and pomp. [2] But they do not even want to be true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church. Furthermore, they persecute and condemn those who do discharge these functions, having been called to do so. So the Church should not be deprived of ministers because of the bishops. [3] Therefore, as the ancient examples of the Church and the fathers teach us, we ourselves should ordain suitable persons to this office. Even according to their own laws, they do not have the right to forbid or prevent us. For their laws say that those ordained even by heretics are truly ordained and stay ordained. As St. Jerome writes of the Church at Alexandria, at first it was governed in common by priests and preachers, without bishops.

Augsburg Confession, Article XIV (Order in the Church): Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII (VII) (Sacraments): [11] But if ordination is understood as carrying out the ministry of the Word, we are willing to call ordination a Sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and has glorious promises, "The gospel... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Likewise, "So shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose" (Isaiah 55:11). [12] If ordination is understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the laying on of hands a Sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in the ministry <that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men>. [13] It is helpful, so far as can be done, to honor the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical people. These fanatics imagine that the Holy Spirit is given not through the Word, but through certain preparations of their own. For example, they imagine

He is given if they sit unoccupied and silent in far-off places, waiting for illumination, as the Enthusiasts formerly taught and the Anabaptists now teach.

Roles in the Church

4. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Confessional Lutherans believe that God has established definite and clearly distinctive roles for men and women in the Church and in the home. It is in accord with the biblical Order of Creation that women not exercise authority over men. Therefore, Confessional Lutherans hold that women should not serve as pastors, elders, congregational presidents, or vice presidents, since such positions require the exercise of authority over men within the congregation. Additionally, women should not participate in the public proclamation of God's Word (reading of the lessons in worship), nor in the administration of the Sacraments (distribution of the elements). The biblical Order of Creation needs a thorough re-examination and application to the life of the Church.



References:

Genesis 2:18-25: ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3:6, 16-17: ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

¹⁶To the woman he said,
"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

¹⁷And to Adam he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

I Corinthians 11:3-15: ³But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, ⁵but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. ⁶For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. ⁷For a man ought not to cover his head,

since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; ¹²for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. ¹³Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, ¹⁵but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

I Corinthians 14:33-34: As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.

Ephesians 5:22-33: ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body.

³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Colossians 3:18: ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

I Timothy 2:11-13: ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve;

Titus 2:3-5: ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

I Peter 3:1, 5: ¹Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,

⁵For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

Worship

5. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Confessional Lutherans retain, honor, and will not dispense with the liturgical worship of the Church and will resist any attempt to conform the worship of the Church to the expectations of the world. This is done so that the unity of the faith and of our Triune God is expressed through the unity of our worship and the faith it conveys.



References:

Genesis 13:18: ¹⁸So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Exodus 12: ¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²"This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. ¹⁵Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. ¹⁸In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. ²⁰You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread."

²¹Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. ²²Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses

to strike you. ²⁴You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ²⁵And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. ²⁶And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

²⁸Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

²⁹At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. ³⁰And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. ³¹Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. ³²Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!"

³³The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." ³⁴So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. ³⁵The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. ³⁶And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

³⁷And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. ³⁹And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

⁴⁰The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. ⁴¹At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴²It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.

⁴³And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. ⁴⁵No foreigner or hired servant may eat of it. ⁴⁶It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. ⁴⁷All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. ⁴⁹There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

⁵⁰All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

Exodus 25:9: ⁹Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

Exodus 28:1-2: ¹"Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

Exodus 40: ¹The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. ³And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. ⁴And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. ⁵And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ⁶You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, ⁷and place

the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

⁹"Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. ¹⁰You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. ¹¹You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it. ¹² Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water ¹³and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. ¹⁴You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, ¹⁵ and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

¹⁶This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. ¹⁸Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. ¹⁹And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. ²¹And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²² He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, ²³and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴ He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, ²⁵ and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶ He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, ²⁷and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸ He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ²⁹ And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³⁰ He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, ³¹with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. ³²When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses. ³³ And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

³⁴Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

II Samuel 24:25: ²⁵ And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

I Kings 8:22-66: ²²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, ²³and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, ²⁴who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. ²⁵Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' ²⁶ Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

²⁷"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! ²⁸Yet have regard to the prayer of your

servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, ²⁹ that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. ³⁰And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

³¹"If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, ³²then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

³³"When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, ³⁴then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.

³⁵"When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, ³⁶then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

³⁷"If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, ³⁸whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁹then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind), ⁴⁰that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.

⁴¹"Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake ⁴²(for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

⁴⁴"If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, ⁴⁵then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.

⁴⁶"If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, ⁴⁷yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' ⁴⁸if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, ⁴⁹then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause ⁵⁰and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them ⁵¹(for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). ⁵²Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. ⁵³For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."

⁵⁴ Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven. ⁵⁵And he

stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, ⁵⁶"Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. ⁵⁷The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, ⁵⁸that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, ⁶⁰that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. ⁶¹ Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day."

⁶² Then the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. ⁶³Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴The same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD, for there he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too small to receive the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from Lebohamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days. ⁶⁶On the eighth day he sent the people away, and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people.

II Chronicles 29:27-30: ²⁷Then Hezekiah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song to the LORD began also, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished. ²⁹When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. ³⁰And Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.

Luke 4:15: ¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Acts 14:1: ¹Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

I Corinthians 14:26-33: ²⁶What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³²and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

Hebrews 10:24-25: ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Revelation 4: ¹After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ²At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵From the throne came flashes of

lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, ⁶and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!"

⁹And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

¹¹"Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created."

Revelation 5: ¹Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" ³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, ⁴and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
¹⁰and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" ¹⁴And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Revelation 7:9-12: ⁹After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen! Blessing and

glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Revelation 15:2-4: ²And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

"Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Revelation 19:1-8: ¹After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
²for his judgments are true and just;
for he has judged the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her immorality,
and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."
³Once more they cried out,

"Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" ⁵And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
small and great."

⁶Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

⁷Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;

⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure"—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Augsburg Confession, Article X (The Lord's Supper): [1] Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and distributed to those who eat the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 10:16). [2] They reject those who teach otherwise.

Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV (The Mass): [5] However, it has never been written or presented that people benefit from hearing lessons they cannot understand or that ceremonies benefit, not because they teach or admonish, but by the outward act (*ex opera operato*) because they are performed that way or are looked upon. Away with such pharisaic opinions!

Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV (The Mass) [34] Because the Mass is for the purpose of giving the Sacrament, we have Communion every holy day, and if anyone desires the Sacrament, we

also offer it on other days, when it is given to all who ask for it. This custom is not new in the Church.

[40] Therefore, since the Mass among us follows the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disproved. This is especially so because we keep the public ceremonies, which are for the most part similar to those previously in use. Only the number of Masses differs. Without a doubt, these might be reduced in a helpful way, because of very great and clear abuses.

Augsburg Confession, Epilogue to Article XXI (Worship of the Saints): [4] Although, in large part, the ancient rites are diligently observed among us. It is a false and hate-filled charge that our churches have abolished all the ceremonies instituted in ancient times. [5] But the abuses connected with the ordinary rites have been a common source of complaint. They have been corrected to some extent since they could not be approved with a good conscience.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Articles VII and VIII (The Church): [33] We believe that the true unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar ceremonies instituted by humans, just as the dissimilar length of day and night does not injure the unity of the Church. However, it is pleasing to us that for the sake of peace, universal ceremonies are kept. We also willingly keep the order of the Mass in the churches, the Lord's Day, and other more famous festival days. With a very grateful mind we include the beneficial ancient ordinances, especially since they contain a discipline. This discipline is beneficial for educating and training the people and those who are ignorant <the young people>.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV (The Mass): [1] At the outset, we must again make this preliminary statement: we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously keep and defend it. Masses are celebrated among us every Lord's Day and on the other festivals. The Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, or prayers, vestments, and other such things.

[99] We have briefly said these things about the Mass for the following reasons. First, we hope that all good people everywhere understand that we keep the dignity of the Mass and show its true use with the greatest zeal. Second, our reasons for disagreeing with the adversaries are most just. Further, we would encourage all good people not to help the adversaries in the profanation of the Mass, burdening themselves with other people's sin. This is an important cause and an important subject, no less important than the work of the prophet Elijah, who condemned the worship of Baal. We have presented this important discussion with the greatest restraint and now reply without using abusive words. But if the adversaries push us to collect all kinds of abuse of the Mass, we will not present the discussion with such toleration.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XV (Human Traditions): [4] The Gospel teaches that through faith we receive freely, for Christ's sake, the forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God. The adversaries, on the other hand, appoint another mediator: these traditions. By these they want to gain forgiveness of sins; by these they want to reconcile God's anger. But Christ clearly says, "In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

[20] Although the Holy Fathers themselves had both rites and traditions, they did not maintain that these are useful or necessary for justification. They did not cloud over Christ's glory and office, but taught that we are justified by faith for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of these human services.

[21] The Fathers celebrated human rites for the body's benefit. For example, by such rites the people would know what time they should gather so that, for the sake of example, all things might be done in order and properly in the churches (1 Corinthians 14:40) and that the common people might receive a sort of training. Distinctions of times and the variety of rites help in reminding the common people. The Fathers maintained the rites for these reasons. We also conclude it is proper for these reasons to keep traditions. We are greatly surprised that the adversaries argue for another design of traditions, that they may merit the forgiveness of sins, grace, or justification. What else is this than to

honor God *with gold and silver, with precious stones* <as Daniel 11:38 says>, that is, to hold that God becomes reconciled by a variety in clothing, ornaments, and by similar rites, which are countless in human traditions?

Large Catechism, Part I (The Ten Commandments): [94] Note, therefore, that the force and power of this commandment lies not in the resting, but in the sanctifying, so that a special *holy exercise* belongs to this day. For other works and occupations are not properly called holy exercises, unless the person is holy first. But here a work is to be done by which a person is himself made holy. This is done (as we have heard) only through God's Word. For his reason, particular places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship have been created and appointed, so that there may be order in public practice (I Corinthians 14:40).

Closed Communion

6. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Confessional Lutherans insist on the retention of closed communion in the Divine Service. This is done to express proper Christian love and pastoral care for those coming to the altar and to preserve the purity of the confession of the Christian/Lutheran faith which is confessed at our altar by those who are present at the altar to receive the Lord's Supper.



References:

I Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:18-19; 11:26-29:

¹⁴Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²²Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

¹⁸For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Augsburg Confession XXIV (The Mass): [9] Therefore, it does not appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.

[35] The Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but they speak a lot about the common Mass <Communion>. [36] Chrysostom says "that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others."

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Articles VII and VIII (The Church): [5] But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but at its core, it is a fellowship of faith and of the Holy spirit in hearts. Yet this fellowship has outward marks to that it can be recognized. These marks are the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. This Church alone is called Christ's body, which Christ renews, sanctifies, and governs by His Spirit. Paul testifies about this when he says, "And gave Him as head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Large Catechism, Part V (The Sacrament of the Altar): [2] Everyone who desires to be a Christian and go to this Sacrament should know them. For it is not our intention to let people come to the Sacrament and administer it to them if they do not know what they seek or why they come. The words, however, are these:

[57] If you consider how good an pure you are and labor to have no hesitations, you would never approach.

Luther's Works, Saint Louis Ed., No. 17, 2016: "It terrifies me to hear that in one and the same church or at on and the same altar both parties are to find and to receive one and the same Sacrament and one party is to believe that it receives nothing but bread and wine, while the other is to believe that it receives the true body and blood of Christ. And I often wonder whether it is credible that a preacher or shepherd of souls can be so hardened and malicious as to say nothing about this and to let both parties go on in this way, receiving one and the same Sacrament, everyone according to his own faith, etc. If such a person exists, he must have a heart harder than any stone, steel or adamant; he must, in fact, be an apostle of wrath...Whoever, therefore, has such preachers or suspects them to be such, let him be warned against them as against the devil incarnate himself."

Luther's Works, Saint Louis Ed., No 10, 2247: "Those who are about to commune are to announce to the bishop or the minister in charge that they want to partake of the Lord's Supper, so that he may know their names and their life. Then let him not admit the petitioners unless they give an account of their faith and reply to the question whether they know what the Lord's Supper is, what it stands for, and of what they desire to become partakers by its use; to wit, whether they are able to recite the words of consecration from memory and explain that they come because of the awareness of sin or the fear of death, or, troubled by some other evil of the temptation of the flesh, hunger and thirst for the Word and sign of grace and salvation from the Lord through the minister...Then, when the minister in charge sees that they understand all these things, he should also note whether they prove this faith and knowledge by their life and conduct (for even Satan understands all these things and is able to talk about them); that is, if he should see some gross sinner, let him absolutely exclude him from this Supper unless by some clear proof he has testified that his life is changed."

Luther's Works, No. 38, p.304: "...therefore, I must leave them to their devices and avoid them as the "self-condemned" [*autokatakritos*, Titus 3:11] who knowingly and intentionally want to be condemned. I must not have any kind of fellowship with any of them, neither by letters, writings, and words, nor in works, as the Lord commands in Matthew 18 [:17], whether he is called Stenckefeld, Zwingli, or whatever he is called. I regard them all as being cut from the same piece of cloth,³⁷ as indeed they are. For they do not want to believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is his true, natural body which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well as St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever (I say) does not want to believe that, let him not trouble me with letters, writings, or words and let him not expect to have fellowship with me. This is final."
[Luther, M. 1999, c1971. *Luther's Works, Vol. 38 : Word and Sacrament IV* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 38 (Vol. 38, Page 304). Fortress Press: Philadelphia]

Growing the Church

7. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, trust in God's appointed means of grace to accomplish all that He promises (Is. 55:11). Accordingly, we joyously proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all people everywhere. We acknowledge that through His Word and Sacraments, God will call to faith those He chooses to call to faith and will save those He chooses to save. Moreover, we acknowledge that the Word and Sacraments are God's only means of grace. Therefore, our efforts or techniques have no power to cause salvation or enhance the likelihood of conversion. Such conversion is effected by the power of the Spirit through the Word according to God's gracious choice.

Thus, while honored to serve as God's instruments to bestow His grace, we also recognize that our efforts do not determine the number of the elect and we believe in our Lord's promise that none of His elect will be lost. God may or may not grant numerical growth to His Church at any given time or place. Indeed, we understand that in these latter days the world will look upon the Church of Christ as despised, beaten down and defeated. Therefore, the success of the Church and her pastors is not to be judged by earthly models of "success" and "efficiency," reflected by the numbers of people who attend their congregations, but by the faithfulness of their teaching and preaching.



References:

Matthew 10:32-33 ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 13:1-23: ¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear."

¹⁰Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

"You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.

¹⁵For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

¹⁸ "Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Matthew 23:37: ³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

Matthew 24:22, 24, 31 ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew 25:34, 41 ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Mark 4:1-20 ¹ Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ² And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³ "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸ And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." ⁹ And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

¹¹ And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."

¹³ And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and

choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

Luke 24:47 ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

John 3:16: ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 6:37, 65-66: All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

⁶⁵And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

John 16:18-25: ¹⁸So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'? ²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

²⁵"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.

Acts 7:51: ⁵¹ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Romans 8:29-30 ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 9:22 ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Roman 11:33 ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

I Corinthians 2:14: ¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

II Corinthians 4:6, 13: ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,

Ephesians 1:4-6, 19a ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

^{19a} and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

II Thessalonians 2:13 ¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

I Timothy 2:4 ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

I John 1:9 ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Large Catechism, Part I (The Ten Commandments, The First Commandment): ^[42] But unfortunately, here is the failure: the world believes none of this, nor regards it as God's Word. For the world sees that those who trust in God and non in Mammon suffer care and want, and that the devil opposes and resists them. They don't have money or favor or honor, and besides, can scarcely support life: On the other hand, those who serve Mammon have power, favor, honor, possessions, and every comfort in the eyes of the world. For this reason, these words must be understood to speak against the appearance of such things. And we must consider that they do not lie or deceive, but must come true.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I (Original Sin): ^[6] In the same way, Christ redeemed human nature as His work, sanctifies it, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, received, redeemed, or sanctified. He will not raise it, adorn it, or save it in the elect. In the ,blesses. Resurrection original sin will be entirely destroyed (1 Corinthians 5:51-57[.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article XI (God's Eternal Foreknowledge (Predestination) and Election)

⁵ God's eternal election, or predestination, means God's preordaining to salvation. It does not include both the godly and the wicked, but only God's children, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the world's foundation was laid. As Paul says in Ephesians 1:4–5, "He chose us in Him.... He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ."

¹⁹ 5. He will also sanctify in love those who are justified, as St. Paul says (Ephesians 1:4).

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI (God's Eternal Foreknowledge (Predestination) and Election)

¹⁴ In other words, the entire teaching about God's purpose, counsel, will, and ordination belongs to our redemption, call, justification, and salvation. They should be treated together the way Paul treats them and has explained this article (Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:4–10) and as Christ treated it in the parable of Matthew 22:1–14; namely, that God in His purpose and counsel ordained the following:

²² 8. Finally, He will eternally save and glorify in life eternal those whom He has elected, called, and justified. ²³ God has prepared salvation not only in general in this counsel, purpose, and ordination. In grace He has considered and chosen to salvation each and every one of the elect who are to be saved through Christ. He has also ordained that in the way just mentioned He will, by His grace, gifts, and efficacy, bring them to salvation. He will aid, promote, strengthen, and preserve them.

²⁵ The following issue also belongs to the further explanation and saving use of the teaching about God's foreknowledge to salvation: Only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life [Revelation 21:27], are saved. Therefore, how can we know, or why and how can we perceive who the elect are and who can and should receive this teaching for comfort?

²⁸ If we want to think about our eternal election to salvation helpfully, we must in every way hold strongly and firmly to this truth: just as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, that is, it belongs to all people. For this reason Christ has given these commands:

- Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations. (Luke 24:47)
- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. (John 3:16)
- Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)
- The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh. (John 6:51)
- The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)
- [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)
- Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)
- For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all. (Romans 11:32)
- Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)
- The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. (Romans 10:12)
- The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ [is] for all who believe. (Romans 3:22)
- For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life. (John 6:40)
- It is Christ's command that this promise of the Gospel also should be offered to everyone in common to whom repentance is preached (Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15).

²⁹ We should not think of this call of God, which is made through the preaching of the Word, as a juggler's act. But we should know that God reveals His will by this call. He will work through the Word in the people He calls, so that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved. For the Word, by which we are called, is a ministry of the Spirit, which gives the Spirit, or by which the Spirit is given (2 Corinthians 3:8). It is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The Holy Spirit wants to be effective through the Word, and to strengthen and give power and ability. It is God's will that we should receive the Word, believe it, and obey it.

³³ We should concern ourselves with this revealed will of God. We should follow and diligently think about it. Through the Word, by which He calls us, the Holy Spirit bestows grace, power, and ability for this purpose. We should not sound the depths of Godhidden predestination, as it is written in Luke 13:23–24, where one asks, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" and Christ answers, "Strive to enter through the narrow door." So Luther says:

But you had better follow the order of this epistle [of Romans]. Worry first about Christ and the gospel, that you may recognize your sin and His grace. Then fight your sin, as the first eight chapters here have taught. Then, when you have reached the eighth chapter, and are under the cross and suffering, this will teach you correctly of predestination in chapters 9, 10, and 11, and how comforting it is. [*Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (1546); LW 35:378]

³⁴ "Many are called, but few are chosen" [Matthew 22:14]. This does not stem from the fact that God's call, which is made through the Word, has the following meaning. It is not as though God said: "Outwardly, through the Word, I indeed call all of you to My kingdom, everyone to whom I give My Word. However, in My heart I do not mean this for everyone, but only for a few. For it is My will that most of those whom I call through the Word shall not be enlightened or converted. Instead, they shall be and remain damned, even though I explain Myself differently to them through the Word, in the call." ³⁵ For this would be to assign contradictory wills to God. In this way it would be taught that God, who surely is Eternal Truth, contradicts Himself, when, in fact,

God punishes such wickedness in people, when a person states one purpose and thinks and means another in the heart (Psalm 5:9; 12:2–4).

³⁸ On this account, as the Augsburg Confession in Article XI says, we also keep private Absolution. We teach that it is God's command that we believe such Absolution. We should regard it as sure that, when we believe the word of Absolution, we are as truly reconciled to God as though we had heard a voice from heaven [John 12:28–30], as the Apology also explains this article. This consolation would be entirely taken from us if we did not understand God's will toward us from the call that is made through the Word and through the Sacraments.

³⁹ The Holy Spirit certainly wants to be present with the Word preached, heard, and considered, and He wants to be effective and work through it. Yet this foundation would be overthrown and taken from us if we misunderstand election. Therefore, the meaning is not at all like the one referred to above, that the elect are to be the sort of people who despise God's Word, thrust it from them, blaspheme and persecute it (Matthew 22:5–6; Acts 13:46); or, when they hear it, harden their hearts (Hebrews 4:2, 7), resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51), persevere in sins without repentance (Luke 14:18–20), do not truly believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), only make an outward show (Matthew 7:22; 22:12), or seek other ways to righteousness and salvation outside of Christ (Romans 9:31).

⁴⁰ Furthermore, God has ordained in His counsel that the Holy Spirit should call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word [Romans 10:17]. He will justify and save all those who by true faith receive Christ. In the same way, He also determined in His counsel that He will harden [Romans 9:18], reprobate, and condemn those who are called through the Word if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Spirit [Acts 7:51]. This is true even though the Spirit wants to be effective and work in them through the Word and persevere through the Word. In this way “many are called, but few are chosen” [Matthew 22:14].

⁴³ This is how much of the mystery of predestination is revealed to us in God's Word. If we abide by this teaching and cling to it, it is a very useful, saving, consoling teaching. It establishes very effectively the article that we are justified and saved without any works and merits of ours, purely out of grace alone, for Christ's sake. Before the time of the world, before we existed, yes, even before the foundation of the world was laid—when, of course, we could do nothing good—we were chosen by grace in Christ to salvation, according to God's purpose (Romans 9:11; 2 Timothy 1:9). ⁴⁴ Furthermore, all opinions and erroneous teachings about the powers of our natural will are overthrown by this. God in His counsel, before the time of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself would produce and work in us by His Holy Spirit's power. Through the Word, He would do everything that belongs to our conversion.

⁵⁴ There is no doubt that God foresaw before the time of the world, and still knows, exactly, which people who are called will believe and which will not believe. He also knows which of the converted will persevere and which will not persevere. He knows which will return after a fall and which will fall into stubbornness. He also knows the number of how many there are of these on either side. Beyond all doubt this is perfectly known to God. ⁵⁵ However, God has reserved this mystery for His wisdom. He has revealed nothing to us about it in His Word, much less commanded us to investigate it with our thoughts. Instead, He has seriously discouraged us from that (Romans 11:33–35). Therefore, we should not reason in our thoughts, draw conclusions, or inquire curiously into these matters, but we should cling to His revealed Word, to which He points us.

⁶⁸ The Father wants all people to hear this proclamation and desires that they come to Christ. Christ does not drive these people from Him, as it is written, “whoever comes to Me I will never cast out” (John 6:37). ⁶⁹ In order that we may come to Christ, the Holy Spirit works true faith through the hearing of the Word. The apostle testifies about this when he says, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17), that is, when it is preached in its truth and purity.

⁷⁶ Furthermore, the declaration in John 6:44 is right and true, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” However, the Father will not do this without means, but has

ordained His Word and Sacraments for this purpose as ordinary means and instruments. It is not the will of the Father or of the Son that a person should not hear or should despise the preaching of His Word and wait for the drawing of the Father without the Word and Sacraments. For the Father draws indeed by the power of His Holy Spirit. However, He works according to His usual way. He works by the hearing of His holy, divine Word, as with a net [Matthew 13:47–48], by which the elect are plucked from the devil's jaws.

⁸⁰ Here, then, the apostle clearly says that God *endured* with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath. But He does not say that He *made* them vessels of wrath. If that had been His will, He would not have required any great long-suffering for it. The reason that they are fitted for destruction belongs to the devil and to people themselves, and not to God.

⁹⁵ From our explanation, friends and enemies and, therefore, everyone, may clearly see that we have no intention of yielding any part of God's eternal, immutable truth for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity (which is not in our power to do anyway). Such peace and unity would have no permanence, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression. We are even less willing to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and clear, condemned errors. ⁹⁶ We do yearn with heartfelt pleasure and love for unity. On our part, we are sincerely willing and anxious to advance that unity (according to our utmost power) by which God's glory remains unharmed. We willingly advance unity where nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, and poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.

Luther's Works, Saint Louis Ed., No. 12, p.437: "Secondly he indicates the danger of neglecting the grace of God. Thereby he certainly intimates that the preaching of the Gospel is not a constant, permanent, and continuing proclamation. The Gospel is rather like a pelting rain that hurries on from place to place (*en fahrender Platzregen*). What it hits, it hits; what it misses it misses. But it does not return nor stay in one place; the sun and heat come after it and lick it up. Experience also teaches us that in no section of the world has the Gospel remained pure and unadulterated beyond the memory of a man. On the contrary, it stood its ground and flourished as long as those remained who had brought it to the fore. But after they had passed from the scene, the light also disappeared. Factious spirits (*Rottengeister*) and false teachers immediately followed."

Purpose and Work of the Church

8. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Confessional Lutherans understand that the purpose and work of the Church is the right teaching of God's Word and the right administration of the Sacraments, thus proclaiming in word and deed the One True Faith. This right teaching and administration of the Sacraments equips God's people to proclaim the Gospel in their divine vocations, thus keeping Christ's command to "Go and make disciples." Confessional Lutherans understand that making disciples is the result of God's work and not the result of human desire, passion, or effort.



References:

Matthew 28:19-20: ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:42: And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 5:42: ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Romans 10:14-17: ¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Romans 13:8-10: ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

II Corinthians 8:3-4: ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—

Ephesians 6:5-8: ⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Colossians 3:18-4:1: ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²²Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

¹Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Isaiah 55:11:

¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Augsburg Confession, Article XX (Good Works): [1] Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding good works. [2] Their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and other similar writings, bear witness that they have usefully taught about all estates and duties of life. They have taught well what is pleasing to God in every station and vocation in life.

[28] It is only by faith, and nothing else, that forgiveness of sins is apprehended. [29] The Holy Spirit is received through faith, hearts are renewed and given new affections, and then they are able to bring forth good works.

Augsburg Confession, Article XXVII (Monastic Vows): [49] God's precepts, and God's true service, are hidden when people hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. True Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, to have great faith, and to trust that for Christ's sake we have a God who has been reconciled [2 Corinthians 5:18-19]. It means to ask for and expect from God His help in all things with confident assurance that we are to live according to our calling in life, being diligent in outward good works, serving in our calling. [50] This is where true perfection and true service of God is to be found. It does not consist in celibacy or in begging or in degrading clothes.

Unionism, Syncretism and Civic Events

9. In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, hold that any and all heterodox teaching can only divide Christ's Church, cast doubt on the assurance of our salvation, and point us to something or someone other than Christ for that assurance. There is no benefit to the Body of Christ in the consideration of falsehood (other than that it may be recognized for what it is as is done in the antitheses of the Confessions). It is wrong for Lutheran pastors to join with clergy of non-Lutheran church bodies or with false religions in any form of public worship (unionism and syncretism) regardless of who sponsors such worship or whether or not the event is termed a "civic event". Neither will Confessional Lutherans join in such worship settings in response to any "once in a lifetime" event.



References:

Deuteronomy 13:3-5: ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

John 17:20-26: ²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Romans 16:17: ¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

I Corinthians 1:10: ¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

I Corinthians 11:19: ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

II Corinthians 6:14-18: ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

¹⁷Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,
¹⁸and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty."

II Corinthians 11:13-15: ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Galatians 1:6-8: ⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

I Timothy 6:3-5: ³If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

II Peter 2:1-3: ¹But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

I John 1, 5-6: ¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

II John 7-11: ⁷For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. ⁹Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

Jude 3-4: ³Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the

saints. ⁴For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Preface (to Emperor Charles V) to the Augsburg Confession: [4] Then we may embrace and maintain the future of one pure and true religion under one Christ, doing battle under Him [Psalm 24:8], living in unity and concord in the one Christian Church.

Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII (Church Authority): [1] There has been great controversy about the power of the bishops, in which some have terribly confused the power of the Church with the power of the State. [2] This confusion has produced great war and riot. All the while the popes, claiming the Power of the Keys, have instituted new services and burdened consciences with Church discipline and excommunication. But they have also tried to transfer the kingdoms of this world to the Church by taking the Empire away from the emperor. [3] Learned and godly people have condemned these errors in the Church for a long time. [4] Therefore, our teachers, in order to comfort people's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the authority of the Church and the authority of the State. They taught that both of them are to be held in reverence and honor, as God's chief blessings on earth, because they have God's command. [5] Our teachers' position is this: the authority of the Keys [Matthew 16:19], or the authority of the bishops—according to the Gospel—is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. [6] Christ sends out His apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld" (John 20:21-22). [7] And in Mark 16:15, Christ says, "Go . . . proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation." [8] This authority is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, either to many or to individuals, according to their calling. In this way are given not only bodily, but also eternal things: eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

[9] These things cannot reach us except by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, "The Gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes" (Romans 1:16).

[10] Therefore, the Church has the authority to grant eternal things and exercises this authority only by the ministry of the Word. So it does not interfere with civil government anymore than the art of singing interferes with civil government. [11] For civil government deals with other things than the Gospel does. Civil rulers do not defend minds, but bodies and bodily things against obvious injuries. They restrain people with the sword and physical punishment in order to preserve civil justice and peace [Romans 13:1-7].

[12] Therefore, the Church's authority and the State's authority must not be confused. The Church's authority has its own commission to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments [Matthew 28:19-20]. [13] Let it not break into the office of another. Let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world to itself. Let it not abolish the laws of civil rulers. Let it not abolish lawful obedience. Let it not interfere with judgments about civil ordinances or contracts. Let it not dictate laws to civil authorities about the form of society.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV (Justification): [33] These testimonies are so clear that, to use Augustine's words in this case, they do not need a keen understanding, but only an attentive hearer. If the carnal mind is hostile against God, the flesh certainly does not love God. If it cannot be subject to God's Law, it cannot love God. If the carnal mind is hostile against God, the flesh sins, even when we do outward civil works. If it cannot be subject to God's Law, it certainly sins even when it has deeds that are excellent and praiseworthy according to human judgment. [34] The adversaries consider only the teachings of the Second Table, which contain civil righteousness that reason understands. Content with this, they think that they fulfill God's Law. In the meantime, they do not see the First Table, which commands that we love God, that we declare God is certainly angry with sin, that we truly fear God, that we declare God certainly hears prayer. But the human heart without the Holy Spirit either feels secure and despises God's judgment, or in punishment flees from God and hates Him when He judges. [35] Therefore, it does not obey the First Table. So, contempt for God, doubt about God's Word, and doubt about the threats and promises dwell in human nature. People truly sin, even when—without the Holy Spirit—they do virtuous works. This is because they act with a wicked

heart according to Romans 14:23: "Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." For such people do their works with contempt for God, just as Epicurus does not believe that God cares for him or that he is regarded or heard by God. This contempt ruins works that seem virtuous because God judges the heart.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII (The Church): [48] Ungodly teachers are to be deserted because they no longer act in Christ's place, but are antichrists. Christ says, "Beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15). Paul says, "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

Power and Primacy of the Pope (The Marks of the Antichrist): [58] The cruelty he exercises <against godly Christians> is also clear. God clearly commands us to flee idolatry [1 Corinthians 10:14], godless doctrine [1 Timothy 6:3-4], and unjust cruelty [Proverbs 11:17]. On this account, all the godly have great, compelling, and clear reasons for not obeying the pope. These compelling reasons comfort the godly against all of the reproaches usually cast against them about causing offenses, schism, and discord.

[59] Those who agree with the pope and defend his doctrine and <false> worship [*Gottesdienst*] defile themselves with idolatry and blasphemous opinions. They become guilty of the blood of the godly, whom the pope persecutes [see Acts 9:1, 4-5; 1 Corinthians 11:27]. They detract from God's glory and hinder the Church's welfare because they confirm errors and crimes through all generations.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (Summary, Rule and Norm): [14] It is not only necessary that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church, but it is also necessary that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd (1 Timothy 3; [2 Timothy 3:16;] Titus 1:9). Faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both things: (a) feed or nourish the lambs and (b) resist the wolves. Then the sheep may flee from strange voices (John 10:5-12) and may separate the precious from the worthless (Jeremiah 15:19).

[15] Regarding these matters, we have thoroughly and clearly told one another the following: a distinction should and must by all means be kept between (a) unnecessary and useless wrangling (the Church should not allow itself to be disturbed by this, since it destroys more than it builds up) and (b) when the kind of controversy arises that involves the articles of faith or the chief points of Christian doctrine. Then the false, opposite doctrine must be reprov'd for defense of the truth.

[16] The aforesaid writings offer the Christian reader—who delights in and has a love for the divine truth—clear and correct information about each and every disputed article of our Christian religion. They show what he should regard and receive as right and true according to God's Word of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. They also show what he should reject, shun, and avoid as false and wrong. The truth must be preserved distinctly and clearly and distinguished from all errors. Nothing must be hidden and concealed under common words. Therefore, we have clearly and directly declared ourselves to one another on the chief and most important articles taken one by one. At the present time these articles have come into controversy so that there might be a public, definite testimony, not only for those now living, but also for our descendants. We make known what is and should remain the unanimous understanding and judgment <decision> of our churches in reference to the articles in controversy:

[17] 1. First, we reject and condemn all heresies and errors that were rejected and condemned in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church, on the true, firm ground of the holy, divine Scriptures.

[18] 2. Second, as just mentioned, we reject and condemn all sects and heresies that are rejected in the writings of the comprehensive summary of the Confession of our churches.

[19] 3. Third, within thirty years divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession because of the *Interim* and for other reasons. Therefore, it has been our purpose to state and to declare plainly, purely, and clearly in thesis and antithesis our faith and confession about each and every one of these divisions. This means we state the true doctrine and the opposite doctrine, in order that the foundation of divine truth might be clear in all articles. In this way all unlawful, doubtful, suspicious, and condemned doctrines might be exposed <distinctly repudiated> (wherever and in whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them,

or who even now may be ready to defend them). So everyone may be faithfully warned against the errors, which are spread here and there in some theologians' writings. No one should be misled in this matter by the reputation of any person. [20] From this declaration the Christian reader will inform himself in every emergency. He will compare it with the writings listed above, and he will find out exactly what was confessed in the beginning about each article in the comprehensive summary of our religion and faith. He will note what was later restated at different times and is repeated by us in this document. He will see that it is in no way contradictory, but is the simple, unchangeable, permanent truth. Therefore, we do not change from one doctrine to another, as our adversaries falsely assert. We eagerly desire to be found loyal to the once-delivered Augsburg Confession and its unanimously accepted Christian meaning. Through God's grace we desire to abide firmly and constantly by the Augsburg Confession in opposition to all corruptions that have entered.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII (The Holy Supper): [96] The third, that the Word of God is not false or deceitful.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article X (Church Practices): [5] Under the title and excuse of outward adiaphora, things are proposed that are in principle contrary to God's Word, although painted another color. These ceremonies are not to be regarded as adiaphora, in which one is free to do as he wants. They must be avoided as things prohibited by God. In a similar way in such a situation ceremonies should not be regarded as genuine free adiaphora, or matters of indifference. This is because they make a show or pretend that our religion and that of the papists are not far apart in order to avoid persecution, or they pretend that the papist's ceremonies are not at least highly offensive to us. When ceremonies are intended for this purpose, and are required and received (as though through them contrary religions are reconciled and become one body), we cannot regard them as adiaphora. When returning to the papacy and departing from the Gospel's pure doctrine and true religion should happen or gradually follow from such ceremonies, we cannot regard them as adiaphora.

[10] We also believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, when the enemies of God's Word want to suppress the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, God's entire church, indeed, every single Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the directors of the community of God <God's church>, is bound by God's Word to confess the doctrine freely and openly. They are bound to confess every aspect of <pure> religion, not only in words, but also in works and actions. In this case, even in adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries or permit these adiaphora to be forced on them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry.

[16] Furthermore, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry by such yielding and conforming in outward things, where there has not previously been Christian unity in doctrine. On the other hand, true believers are grieved, offended, and weakened in their faith. Every Christian, for the sake of his soul's welfare and salvation, is bound to avoid both of these, as it is written:

Woe to the world for temptations to sin! (Matthew 18:7)

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6)

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI (Election): [95] From our explanation, friends and enemies and, therefore, everyone, may clearly see that we have no intention of yielding any part of God's eternal, immutable truth for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity (which is not in our power to do anyway). Such peace and unity would have no permanence, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression. We are even less willing to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and clear, condemned errors. [96] We do yearn with heartfelt pleasure and love for unity. On our part, we are sincerely willing and anxious to advance that unity (according to our utmost power) by which God's glory remains unharmed. We willingly advance unity where nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the

least error, and poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XII (Other Factions and Sects): [7] However, we do not want the condemned errors of the factions and sects we just mentioned to be silently ascribed to us. [8] For the most part these groups, as is the nature of such spirits, secretly stole in at certain places. They did this especially at a time when no place or room was given to the pure Word of the Holy Gospel, when all its sincere teachers and confessors were persecuted, and the deep darkness of the papacy still prevailed. Poor, simple people, in their simplicity (who could not help but feel the clear idolatry and false faith of the papacy), embraced whatever was called the Gospel and was not papistic. We cannot avoid testifying against these groups publicly, before all Christendom. We have no part or fellowship with their errors, be they many or few. We reject and condemn them one and all. They are wrong and heretical, and are contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles and to our Christian Augsburg Confession, which is well grounded in God's Word.

(Erroneous Article of the Anabaptists) [9] For instance, the erroneous, heretical doctrines of the Anabaptists are not to be tolerated and allowed in the Church or in the commonwealth or in domestic life. For they teach the following:

(Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians) [28] In a similar way, the Schwenckfeldians assert the following:

(Erroneous Articles of the New Arians) [36] The New Arians teach that Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal divine essence with God the Father. They say He is only adorned with divine majesty inferior to, and beside, God the Father.

(Erroneous Articles of the New Anti-Trinitarians) [37] 1. Some Anti-Trinitarians reject and condemn the ancient, approved Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. They condemn both their sense and words. These people teach that there is not just one eternal divine essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They teach that, just as there are three distinct persons (God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), so each person has also its essence distinct and separate from the other persons. They say that all three are either like three men—distinct and separate in their essence, of the same power, wisdom, majesty, and glory <as some imagine>—or are unequal in essence and properties <as some think>.

[Conclusion] [39] These and similar articles, one and all, with what belongs to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to God's Word, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's Catechisms. All godly Christians should beware of these articles to the extent that the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article XII (Other Factions <Heresies> and Sects): [2] The Anabaptists are divided among themselves into many factions, because one fights for more errors, another for less. However, they all in common profess the sort of doctrine that cannot be tolerated or allowed in the Church, in the commonwealth and secular government, or in home life.