

Resolution

To Define and Affirm Lutheran Identity Annual Congregational Meeting May 13, 2025

St. John's Lutheran Church
Orange, California

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod states in Article II of its constitution:

Article II Confession

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined solely by the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined not in a manner that adds moral, ethical, cultural, legal, or political requirements or preferences to the Evangelical Lutheran confession, but first and foremost according to article IV of the Augsburg Confession: "Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or words. 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 (Romans 3 and 4)"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined not in a manner that uses traditions and rites as the primary foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran confession, but according to article VII of the Augsburg Confession: "The Church is the congregation of the saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered. For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere. As Paul says, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all' (Ephesians 4:5-6)"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined not in a manner that venerates Martin Luther or places Lutheranism in a particular ethnic category, but according to the Large Catechism: "This we ask [Thy Kingdom come], both in order that we who have accepted it may remain faithful and grow daily in it and in order that it may gain recognition and followers among other people and advance with power throughout the world. So we pray that, led by the Holy Spirit, many may come into the kingdom of grace and become partakers of salvation..." (LC, The Lord's Prayer, 52); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined not in a manner that limits Christian freedom in matters of organization and practices, but according to article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession: "It is necessary that the doctrine of Christian freedom be preserved in the churches. In other words, the bondage of the Law is not necessary in order to be justified, as it is written in the Epistle to the Galatians, 'do not submit again to a yoke of slavery' (5:1). It is necessary for the chief article of the Gospel to be preserved, namely that we obtain grace freely by faith in Christ, and not by certain observances or acts of worship devised by people...It is proper to keep such ordinances just so long as consciences are not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to regard it as sin if they are changed without offending others" (51, 52, 56), and according to article X of the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration: "As soon as Christian freedom is weakened and human traditions are forced on the Church with coercion, as though it were wrong and a sin to omit them, the way is already prepared for idolatry. In this way, human traditions are multiplied and regarded as divine worship, not only equal to God's ordinances, but even placed above them" (15); and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the term "Lutheran Identity" be defined and affirmed as adherence to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions alone, understanding that "the churches will not condemn one another because of differences in ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them" (FC SD X 31), and rejoicing in the Evangelical Lutheran foundation of grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, and Christ alone as the foundation of the Lutheran confession.