

Evangelical Lutheran COMMUNION THESES

(Adopted by the Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations – 8/31/2017)

In SUMMARY ...

THESIS I

The Institution and Validity of the Lord's Supper

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took **bread**, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is **my body** which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the **cup**, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in **my blood**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you **eat this bread and drink the cup**, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23–26 ESV)

¹⁶ The **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? (1 Corinthians 10:16 ESV)

We confess that the Sacrament of the Altar "is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself."¹

We reject all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny that the very body and blood of Christ are truly present and received with the bread and wine in the Sacrament.² We also reject the use of any language in substitution of Christ's clear words of institution and consecration,³ or of any elements other than bread and wine in the Supper.⁴

THESIS I ... Therefore we hold that essential to the Lord's Supper and its validity are the exclusive use of bread and wine, and Christ's words of institution and consecration as written by the holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul.

¹ *Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH: St. Louis, 1986, p. 30.

² Paul McCain, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, Second Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005, 2006), FC Ep. VII 6–7, 488. "6 1. **We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper Christ's body and blood are truly and essentially present, and that they are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.** 7 2. We believe, teach, and confess that the words of Christ's testament are not to be understood in any other way than the way they read, according to the letter. So the bread does not signify Christ's absent body and the wine His absent blood. **But, because of the sacramental union, <the bread and wine> are truly Christ's body and blood.**"

³ *Concordia*, FC Ep. VII 9, 488. "9 4. At the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unambiguously that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of Christ's institution should in no way be left out. Instead, they should be publicly recited, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing that we bless" and so forth. This blessing occurs through the reciting of Christ's words."

Concordia, SD VII 85, 575–76. "85 To preserve this true Christian doctrine about the Holy Supper, and to avoid and abolish many idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, the following useful rule and standard has been derived from the words of institution: **Nothing has the nature of a Sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ or apart from the action divinely instituted. This means, if Christ's institution is not kept as He appointed it, then there is no Sacrament.**"

⁴ *Concordia*, SD VII 48–49, 570–71. "48 All the circumstances of the Holy Supper's institution testify that these words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (which in themselves are simple, plain, clear, firm, and beyond doubt), cannot and must not be understood other than in their usual, proper, and common meaning. For Christ gives this command at the table and at supper. **There is certainly no doubt that He speaks of real, natural bread and of natural wine.**"

23 THESIS II

24 The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

25 ⁴⁶ . . . “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,
26 ⁴⁷ and that **repentance and forgiveness of sins** should be proclaimed in his name to all
27 nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46–47 ESV)

28 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night
29 when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said,
30 “This is my body **which is for you**. Do this in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23–24
31 ESV)

32 ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, **all**
33 **of you**, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the**
34 **forgiveness of sins**. (Matthew 26:27–28 ESV)

35 **We confess** that “These words, ‘Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,’ show us
36 that in the Sacrament **forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation** are given us through these words. For
37 where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. . . . These words, along with the
38 bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever **believes** these words has
39 exactly what they say: ‘forgiveness of sins.’”⁵

40 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny the forgiveness of sins
41 promised and given in the Sacrament, and likewise, that repentance and faith⁶ are essential to a right
42 reception of the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of sins.⁷

43 **THESIS II ... Therefore we hold that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to eat and to drink**
44 **the very body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life, and**
45 **salvation. Essential and prerequisite to receiving these blessings are faith, and repentance of all**
46 **sins of doctrine and life.**

47 THESIS III

48 Unity of Faith and Doctrine Is Prerequisite to Communion Fellowship

49 ¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and
50 that there be **no divisions among you**, but that you **be united in the same mind and the**

⁵ *Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH: St. Louis, 1986, p. 31

⁶ *Concordia*, AC XII 3–5, 38. “³ Now, strictly speaking, **repentance consists of two parts**. ⁴ **One part is contrition**, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. ⁵ **The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel [Romans 10:17] or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven**. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror.”

⁷ *Concordia*, Ap XII 60–63, 165–66. “(With God's help,) we shall defend (to eternity and against all the gates of hell) that this **faith is truly necessary for the forgiveness of sins**, and so place it among the parts of repentance. . . . ⁶¹ Furthermore, . . . that **Absolution is received only through faith is proven from Paul, who teaches that the promise cannot be received except by faith** (Romans 4:16). **Absolution is the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, it necessarily requires faith**. ⁶² **Neither do we see how the person who does not yield to Absolution may be said to receive Absolution. What else is the refusal to yield to Absolution but charging God with falsehood?** If the heart doubts, it regards those things that God promises as uncertain and of no account. So, it is written, “Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son” (1 John 5:10). ⁶³ . . . **Therefore, whatever receives the forgiveness of sins is correctly added to the parts of repentance.**”

51 same judgment. . . . ¹³ **Is Christ divided?** (1 Corinthians 1:10, 13 ESV)

52 ¹⁷ Because there is **one bread**, we who are many are **one body**, for we all partake of the one
53 bread. ¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices **participants in**
54 **the altar?** ²⁰ . . . I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do
55 not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the
56 cup of demons. **You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.** (1
57 Corinthians 10:17–18, 20–21 ESV)

58 ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For **what partnership has righteousness**
59 **with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?** ¹⁵ **What accord has Christ**
60 **with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?** . . . ¹⁷ **Therefore**
61 **go out from their midst, and be separate from them,** says the Lord. (2 Corinthians 6:14–
62 15, 17 ESV)

63 **We confess** that the “one holy Church is to remain forever. The Church is the congregation of
64 saints [Psalm 149:1] in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly
65 administered. ² **For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the**
66 **Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.**”⁸

67 And, “We believe, teach, and confess also that no church should condemn another because
68 one has less or more outward ceremonies than the other, for those are not commanded by God. This is
69 true as long as they have **unity with one another in the doctrine and all its articles and in the**
70 **right use of the holy Sacraments.** This practice follows the well-known saying “Disagreement in
71 fasting does not destroy **agreement in faith.**”⁹

72 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny that agreement in all
73 articles of faith and doctrine is essential for Communion fellowship,¹⁰ and likewise, that repentance of
74 sins includes all sins of *doctrine*¹¹ and life. We also reject the argument that exclusion of other
75 Christians from Communion on the basis of doctrinal (denominational) differences violates the
76 harmony and love of the Christian Church,¹² and that such exclusion necessarily denies that person as

⁸ *Concordia*, AC VII 1–2, 34.

⁹ *Concordia*, FC, Ep., X 7, 497.

¹⁰ C. F. W. Walther, *Church Fellowship* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015).

“Communion Fellowship,” 1870, translated by Lawrence White, Thesis X, 177. **“Holy Communion is also a mark of confession of the faith and doctrine of those with whom one celebrates it. Therefore the admission of members of heterodox fellowships to the celebration of Communion within the Lutheran Church is in conflict with the following: 1. Christ’s institution; 2. The commanded unity of the Church in faith and corresponding confession; 3. Our love for the one to whom the Sacrament is administered; 4. Our love for our own fellow believers, especially the weak, who by this action would be given grievous offense; 5. the command not to become participants in the sins and errors of others.”**

¹¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 27 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), “Lectures on Galatians,” 1535, edited by Jaroslav Pelican and Walter A. Hansen, 41–42. “With the utmost rigor we demand that all the articles of Christian doctrine, both large and small—although we do not regard any of them as small—be kept pure and certain. This is supremely necessary. **For this doctrine is our only light, which illumines and directs us and shows the way to heaven; if it is overthrown in one point, it must be overthrown completely.**”

¹² Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians,” 38. “We are surely prepared to observe peace and love with all men, provided that they leave the doctrine of faith perfect and sound for us. If we cannot obtain this, it is useless for them to demand love from us. **A curse on a love that is observed at the expense of the doctrine of faith, to which everything must yield—love, an apostle, an angel from heaven, etc.!** . . . If they believed that it is the Word of God, they would not play around with it this way. No, they would treat it with the utmost respect; they would put their faith in it without any disputing or doubting; and they would know that one Word of God is all and that all are one, that one doctrine is all doctrines and all are one, so that when one is lost all are eventually lost, because they belong together and are held together by a common bond. **Therefore let us leave**

77 a Christian, or excommunicates them. Rather, they are only suspended until they are reconciled with
78 the orthodox Church.¹³

79 **THESIS III ... Therefore we hold that unity of faith in the doctrine and all its articles is**
80 **prerequisite to Communion fellowship. This unity is intrinsic to the fellowship of the Church**
81 **and its expression in Holy Communion. Communion fellowship is church fellowship.**

82 **THESIS IV**

83 **Who Is Worthy and Well Prepared to Receive the Lord's Supper**

84 ¹⁹Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father
85 and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰**teaching them** to observe all that I have commanded
86 you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19 ESV)

87 ²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to **the**
88 **disciples**, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given
89 thanks he gave it to **them**, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸for this is my blood of the
90 covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins**. (Matthew 26:26–28
91 ESV)

92 ²⁷Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner
93 will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸**Let a person examine himself,**
94 **then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.** (1 Corinthians 11:27–28 ESV)

95 ⁵**Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith.** Test yourselves. Or do you not
96 realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the
97 test! . . . ⁷But we pray to God that you may not do wrong . . . , but that you may do what is
98 right, . . . ⁸**For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.** (2
99 Corinthians 13:5–8 ESV)

100 ⁶Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷Cleanse out the old leaven
101 that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has
102 been sacrificed. ⁸**Let us therefore celebrate the festival,** not with the old leaven, the leaven
103 of malice and evil, but **with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** (1 Corinthians
104 5:6–8 ESV)

105 **We confess** that “Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that
106 person is truly worthy and well prepared who has **faith** in these words: ‘Given and shed for you for
107 the forgiveness of sins.’”¹⁴

108 And that concerning this Sacrament one is to know “**What is it? What are its benefits? and**
109 **Who is to receive it?** And all these points are established through the words by which Christ has
110 instituted this Sacrament. **Everyone who desires to be a Christian and go to this Sacrament**
111 **should know them.** For it is not our intention to let people come to the Sacrament and administer it

the praise of harmony and of Christian love to them. We, on the other hand, praise faith and the majesty of the Word. Love can sometimes be neglected without danger, but the Word and faith cannot.

¹³ C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” Thesis XI, 187. “**Members of heterodox fellowships are not excommunicated by their nonadmission to the celebration of Holy Communion in fellowship with the Lutheran Church, much less are they (declared to be heretics and)**¹⁵ **condemned, but only suspended until they become reconciled with the orthodox Church by leaving the false fellowship in which they stand.** (¹⁵ Here Walther has the following footnote: “The words in parentheses were inserted into the thesis by resolution of the convention.”)”

¹⁴ *Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH: St. Louis, 1986, p. 31.

112 to them **if they do not know what they seek or why they come.**¹⁵

113 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny Baptism and instruction
114 in the Christian faith as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in particular the doctrine of
115 the Lord's Supper, as essential to a "worthy and well prepared" reception of the Lord's Supper,
116 including faith in these words "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."¹⁶ This instruction
117 includes both the examination of the Communicant by the Pastor, and the self-examination of the
118 Communicant in keeping with faith and repentance of all sins.¹⁷

119 **THEESIS IV ... Therefore we hold that those who are worthy and well prepared to receive the**
120 **Lord's Supper are those baptized, instructed, examined, and publicly confess the Christian**
121 **faith as taught by and in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. These are**
122 **Communicant Members.**

123 **THEESIS V**

124 **Who Is Not Worthy and Well Prepared to Receive the Lord's Supper**

125 ²⁷ **Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy**
126 **manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.** ²⁸ Let a person examine
127 himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks
128 without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you
129 are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Corinthians 11:27–30 ESV)

130 ¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for **those who cause divisions** and create obstacles
131 **contrary to the doctrine** that you have been taught; **avoid them.** ¹⁸ For such persons do not
132 serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive
133 the hearts of the naive. (Romans 16:17–18 ESV)

134 ¹¹ But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone** who bears the name of brother
135 **if he is guilty** of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—
136 **not even to eat with such a one.** (1 Corinthians 5:11 ESV)

137 **We confess** that "anyone who does not believe these words [Given and shed for you for the
138 forgiveness of sins] or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words 'for you' require all
139 hearts to believe."¹⁸ For "it is not our intention to let people come to the Sacrament and administer it

¹⁵ *Concordia*, LC V 1–2, 431.

¹⁶ *Concordia*, SD VII, 69–70, 573–74. ⁶⁹ Some Christians have a weak faith and are shy, troubled, and heartily terrified because of the great number of their sins. They think that in their great impurity they are not worthy of this precious treasure and Christ's benefits. They feel their weakness of faith and lament it, and from their hearts desire that they may serve God with stronger, more joyful faith and pure obedience. **These are the truly worthy guests for whom this highly venerable Sacrament has been especially instituted and appointed.** ⁷⁰ For Christ says Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28) Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. (Matthew 9:12)

¹⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), "Treatise on New Testament," 1520, edited by E. Theodore Bachmann, 88–89. "So if you would receive this sacrament and testament worthily, **see to it that you give emphasis to these living words of Christ, rely on them with a strong faith, and desire what Christ has promised you in them; then it will be yours, then you will be worthy and well prepared.** This faith and confidence must and will make you joyful and awaken a bold love for Christ, by means of which you will gladly begin to lead a really good life **and with all your heart to flee from sin.**"

¹⁸ *Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH: St. Louis, 1986, p. 31.

140 to them **if they do not know what they seek or why they come.**¹⁹

141 For “Christ’s true, essential body and blood are orally received and partaken of in the Holy
142 Supper by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the Supper. This is done by the
143 believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them and that Christ
144 dwells in them and is at work in them. **This supper is received by the unbelieving for their
145 judgment and condemnation.**²⁰

146 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny that among the unworthy
147 and unprepared are those not baptized, or not instructed and do not publicly confess the Christian
148 faith as taught by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, or not able to examine themselves, or not
149 repentant of all sins (including doctrinal errors), and thus not reconciled with and under the banner of
150 the orthodox (Lutheran) Church.²¹

151 **THESIS V ... Therefore we hold that those *not* worthy and well prepared to receive the Lord’s**
152 **Supper incur both *sin* and *judgment*. Communing heterodox Christians without renunciation of**
153 **their errors and reconciliation with the orthodox (Lutheran) Church *sins* against the unity of**
154 **faith intrinsic to the Sacrament.**

155 **THESIS VI**

156 **Pastoral Care in the Administration of the Lord’s Supper**

157 ²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, **but let him who has my word speak my**
158 **word faithfully.** (Jeremiah 23:28 ESV)

159 ⁷“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a
160 word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸**If I say to the wicked, O**
161 **wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from**
162 **his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your**
163 **hand.** ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way,
164 that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. (Ezekiel 33:7–9
165 ESV)

166 ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷for I did not
167 shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸**Pay careful attention to**
168 **yourself and to all the flock,** in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to care for**
169 **the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.** (Acts 20:26–28 ESV)

170 ¹This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of
171 God. ²**Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.** (1 Corinthians
172 4:1–2 ESV)

173 Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel I preached to you,** which you received, in
174 which you stand, ²and **by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I**
175 **preached to you—**unless you believed in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 ESV)

¹⁹ *Concordia*, LC V 2, 431.

²⁰ *Concordia*, SD VII 63–64, 573.

²¹ *Concordia*, SD VII 68, 573. “⁶⁸ It must also be carefully explained who the unworthy guests of this Supper are. **They are those who go to this Sacrament without true repentance and sorrow for their sins, without true faith and the good intention of amending their lives.** By their unworthy oral eating of Christ’s body, they load themselves with damnation (i.e., with temporal and eternal punishments) and become guilty of profaning Christ’s body and blood.” [1 Corinthians 11:29]

176 **We confess** ... that “no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the
177 Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call,”²² and that, “No one is admitted to the Sacrament without
178 first being examined,”²³ and that, “¹ Confession in the churches is not abolished among us. The body
179 of the Lord is not usually given to those who have not been examined [1 Corinthians 11:27–28] and
180 absolved.”²⁴

181 And also that “when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in
182 particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve
183 those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as
184 if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.”²⁵

185 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny examination by the
186 Pastor of those he admits to Communion as essential to a right administration and reception of the
187 Sacrament.²⁶ Likewise, we reject that it is only incumbent upon the Communicant to examine himself
188 to determine whether he is “worthy and well prepared” to commune, and one who holds the
189 confession of and is reconciled with the orthodox (Lutheran) Church.²⁷

190 **THESIS VI ... Therefore we hold that the Pastor is to know the name, manner of life, and faith**
191 **of those he communes. Examination of the Communicant by the pastor for a “worthy and well**
192 **prepared” reception of the holy Communion in reconciliation with the orthodox (Lutheran)**
193 **Church is prerequisite to receiving the Lord’s Supper.**

194 **THESIS VII**

195 **Pastoral Discretion in Extenuating Circumstances**

196 ⁴² And the Lord said, “**Who then is the faithful and wise manager**, whom his master will set

²² *Concordia*, AC XIV, 39.

²³ *Concordia*, AC XXIV 6, 47.

²⁴ *Concordia*, AC XXV 1, 50.

²⁵ *Luther’s Small Catechism*, CPH: St. Louis, 1986, p. 29.

²⁶ Chemnitz, *Examination*, II:315. “There is no doubt that it is incumbent on all ministers of the church that they diligently and earnestly admonish their parishioners, and indeed set before them the very grave threats of guilt and divine judgment, lest they approach the Lord’s Supper without making the prior examination or preparation of which Paul speaks.”

Open Letter to Those in Frankfurt on the Main (1533), trans. Jon D. Vieker, *Concordia Journal* 16/4 (1990): 343 (§25). “It is quite true that wherever the preacher administers only bread and wine for the Sacrament, he is not very concerned about whom he gives it, what they know and believe, or what they receive. . . . **However, because we are concerned about nurturing Christians who will still be here after we are gone, and because it is Christ’s body and blood that are given out in the Sacrament, we will not and cannot give such a Sacrament to anyone unless he is first examined regarding what he has learned from the Catechism and whether he intends to forsake the sins which he has again committed.**”⁵⁹ For we do not want to make Christ’s church into a pig pen [Matthew 7:6], letting each one come unexamined to the Sacrament as a pig to its trough. Such a church we leave to the Enthusiasts!”

²⁷ C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” 187. “Our tenth thesis is therefore aimed directly against the Union,¹⁴ that grave of the Lutheran Church, and particularly also against its admirers and supporters within our church [and] against the unionistic, syncretistic preachers. **We label them all as shameful, unscrupulously belly-server, who leave it up to the consciences of their Communion guests whether and what they believe and confess regarding this Sacrament**, thereby wrongly citing the passage, ‘Now let a person examine himself,’ and so on [1 Corinthians 11:28], as though this text did not apply only to the lay people, but the following to the preachers: ‘This is how one should regard us, as . . . stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful’ [1 Corinthians 4:1–2].” [¹⁴The forced union of Lutherans and Reformed in Prussia (1817) and other German states.]

197 over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? ⁴³ **Blessed is that**
198 **servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.** (Luke 2:42–43 ESV)

199 ² **Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.** (1 Corinthians 4:2 ESV)

200 ⁷ For an overseer, as God’s steward, . . . must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, **so**
201 **that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who**
202 **contradict it.** (Titus 1:7, 9 ESV)

203 **We confess** as ³⁶ Chrysostom says “that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to
204 the Communion and keeping back others.”²⁸ For “it is not our intention to let people come to the
205 Sacrament and administer it to them **if they do not know what they seek or why they come.**”²⁹ And
206 “¹ **Our churches teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession**
207 **among men,** but even more, to be signs and testimonies of God’s will toward us.”³⁰

208 **We reject** all beliefs, teachings, and practices that diminish or deny pastoral discretion as that
209 which determines when a salutary administration and reception of the Lord’s Supper can take place in
210 keeping with all *divine ordinances* of the Sacrament, including “unity with one another in the doctrine
211 and all its articles and in the right use of the holy Sacraments.”³¹ We likewise reject the argument that
212 there are “extenuating circumstances” or “emergency” applications of the Lord’s Supper that warrant
213 exceptions to the divine ordinances that establish the Sacrament and its right use and administration.³²

214 **THESIS VII ... Therefore we hold that what is prerequisite by *divine ordinance* to a faithful**
215 **administration and worthy reception of the Lord’s Supper in normal circumstances, including**
216 **reconciliation and fellowship with the orthodox (Lutheran) Church, is also prerequisite in all**
217 **“extenuating or emergency” circumstances.**

²⁸ *Concordia*, AC XXIV 36, 49.

²⁹ *Concordia*, LC V 2, 431.

³⁰ *Concordia*, AC XIII 1, 38.

C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” 166. “**The main purpose of the Holy Sacraments is indeed to be tools and means through which the promises of grace are offered, communicated, and appropriated, as seals, testimonies, and pledges through which these promises are sealed. However, subordinate to this main purpose, they have also this purpose: to be distinctive signs of confession and bonds of fellowship in worship. Communion fellowship is therefore church fellowship.**”

³¹ *Concordia*, FC, Ep., X 7, 497.

C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” 166–67. “[The Holy Sacraments] . . . are also distinctive signs of confession and bonds of fellowship in worship.” **We therefore allow Catholics or outright heathen to hear the Word of God with us; but one who is allowed to participate in the Sacraments must be recognized as standing in proper Christian faith,** for one thereby marks him as it were with a seal of fraternal fellowship in faith. This applies to both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.”

C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” 174. “[Holy Communion should not be given] to those who have not been reconciled in a Christian way with one who has given offense or has been offended, and likewise also the heterodox **as long as they have not renounced their errors and their heterodox fellowship and in this way have reconciled themselves with the orthodox Church.**”

C. F. W. Walther, “Communion Fellowship,” 179. “So already two hundred years ago the enemies of the correct doctrine and practice of Communion said that Christians distinguish themselves from the heathen, but not the orthodox from the heterodox, by partaking of this Sacrament. But that is false. All unbelief and every false doctrine is a part of heathenism. **Communion fellowship with all heterodox is forbidden in Christ’s institution. . . . What a crass contradiction and what vile mockery of Christ’s institution are thus involved if both parties celebrate one combined Communion!**”

³² C. F. W. Walther, *Pastoral Theology* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017). 20 6. “Starting with Luther, the vast majority of our theologians maintain that the Holy Supper *should never be administered* privately by a person not holding the public preaching office or by a so-called *layman*—partly because, unlike Baptism and Absolution, **there cannot be an emergency regarding Holy Communion which would justify straying from God’s order.**”