

# What Do Lutherans Believe?

## What do Lutherans believe about Jesus Christ?

Jesus is God's son, sent by God to become human like us. In his life and being he broke through the prison of sinfulness and thus restored the relationship of love and trust that God intended to exist between himself and his children. Though he is eternal, with God at the beginning of time, he was born on earth of a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was at once truly God and truly human.

The man, Jesus of Nazareth, lived and died in Palestine during the governorship of the Roman administrator, Pontius Pilate; we believe him to be the Messiah chosen by God to show his love for the world. He is God, yet with all the limitations of being human. His relationship to God, however, was not one of sin but rather of perfect obedience to the Father's will. For the sake of a sinful world, Jesus was condemned to death on the cross.

But death could not contain him. On the third day after his execution, the day Christians observe as Easter, Jesus appeared among his followers as the risen, living Lord. By this great victory God has declared the Good News of reconciliation. The gap between all that separates us from our

Creator has been bridged. Thus, Christ lives today wherever there are people who faithfully believe in him and wherever the Good News of reconciliation is preached and the Sacraments administered.

## About Martin Luther

Martin Luther (b. November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, d. February 18, 1546 in Eisleben) is known as the Father of Protestantism. He had studied to become a lawyer before becoming an Augustinian monk in 1505, and was ordained a priest in 1507. While continuing his studies in pursuit of a Doctor of Theology degree, he discovered significant differences between what he read in the Bible and the theology and practices of the church. On October 31, 1517, he posted a challenge on the church door at Wittenberg University to debate 95 theological issues. Luther's hope was that the church would reform its practice and preaching to be more consistent with the Word of God as contained in the Bible.

What started as an academic debate escalated to a religious war, fueled by fiery temperaments and violent language on both sides. As a result, there was not a reformation of the church but a separation. "Lutheran" was a name applied to Luther and his followers as an insult but adopted as a badge of honor by them instead.

## What does Luther's Seal symbolize?



While a professor at Wittenberg, Luther devised this seal which he declared was meant to be "expressive of his theology." This explanation is the gist of a letter written to his friend, Lazarus Spengler, town clerk of Nuremberg.

*The first thing expressed in my seal is a cross, black, within the heart, to put me in mind that faith in Christ crucified saves us. " For one who believes from the heart will be justified."*

*Now, although the cross is black, mortified, and intended to cause pain, yet it does not change the color of the heart, does*

*not destroy nature -- i.e., does not kill, but keeps alive. "For the just shall live by faith," -- by faith in the Savior.*

*But this heart is fixed upon the center of a white rose, to show that faith causes joy, consolation and peace. The rose is white, not red, because white is the ideal color of all angels and blessed spirits.*

*This rose, moreover, is fixed in a sky-colored ground, to denote that such joy of faith in the spirit is but an earnest and beginning of heavenly joy to come, as anticipated and held by hope, though not yet revealed. And around this ground base is a golden ring, to signify that such bliss in heaven is endless, and more precious than all joys and treasures, since gold is the best and most precious metal. Christ, our dear Lord, He will give grace unto eternal life. Amen.*

-Martin Luther

### **What do Lutherans believe basically?**

As Lutherans, we still celebrate the Reformation on October 31 and still hold to the basic principles of theology and practice espoused by Luther, such as **Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura**:

- We are saved by the **grace of God alone** -- not by anything we do;
- Our salvation is through **faith alone** -- we only need to believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who died to redeem us;
- The **Bible is the only norm** of doctrine and life -- the only true standard by which teachings and doctrines are to be judged.

Another of Luther's principles was that Scriptures and worship need to be done in the language of the people. Luther's Small Catechism, which contains teachings on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Confession and Absolution, Holy Communion and Morning and Evening Prayers, is still used to introduce people to the Lutheran faith, as is the Augsburg Confession.

### **What's so important about Church?**

The Christian church is made up of those who have been baptized and thus have received Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Sometimes it is referred to as "the Body of Christ." Lutherans believe that they are a part of a community of faith that began with the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's presence with his people, on the day of Pentecost. The church, regardless of the external form it takes, is the fellowship of those who have been restored to God by Christ. Indeed, to be called into fellowship with Christ is also to be called into community with other believers.

The church is essential to Christian life and growth. Its members are all sinners in need of God's grace. It has no claim on human perfection. The church exists solely for the hearing and doing of God's Word. It can justify its existence only when it proclaims the living Word of Christ, administers the Sacraments and gives itself to the world in deeds of service and love. Most Lutherans recognize a wider fellowship of churches and are eager to work alongside them in ecumenical ministries and projects.

### **What is Sin?**

Lutherans believe that all people live in a condition that is the result of misused freedom. "Sin" describes not so much individual acts of wrongdoing as fractured relationships between the people of creation and God. Our every attempt to please God falls short of the mark. By the standard of the Law, of which the Ten Commandments are a classic summary, God expresses his just and loving expectations for creation, and our failure to live up to those expectations reveals only our need for God's mercy and forgiveness.

### **How Do Lutherans view the Bible?**

To borrow a phrase from Luther, the Bible is "the manger in which the Word of God is laid." While Lutherans recognize differences in the way the Bible should be studied and interpreted, it is accepted as the primary and authoritative witness to the church's faith. Written and transcribed by many authors over a period of many centuries, the Bible bears

remarkable testimony to the mighty acts of God in the lives of people and nations.

In the Old Testament is found the vivid account of God's covenant relationship to Israel. In the New Testament is found the story of God's new covenant with all of creation in Jesus. The Old Testament consists of 39 books, originally written primarily in Hebrew. They tell the story of God and his people from about 2000 B.C. through about 400 B.C.

The New Testament is the first-hand proclamation of those who lived through the events of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection. As such, it is the authority for Christian faith and practice. The Bible is thus not a definitive record of history or science. Rather, it is the record of the drama of God's saving care for creation throughout the course of history. The New Testament consists of 27 books, originally written primarily in Greek. They tell the story of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They share the story of the beginnings and spread of the church from the year zero through about 100 A.D.

### **Do Lutherans believe only Lutherans are Christians?**

No. We do not believe that Lutherans have a corner on the truth about what it means to be a Christian. Many Christian denominations exist in the world - each with their own emphasis, style of worship, organizational structure and preferences. Christians come in many flavors. Lutherans just like the taste of grace!

### **How do you become a Lutheran?**

To become a Lutheran, only Baptism and instruction in the Christian faith is required. If you are already baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you do not have to be baptized again no matter in what kind of church the baptism occurred or when. To become at Lutheran at Living Waters Lutheran Church involves participating in our New Members Class.

## **Overview of the Bible**

**The Old Testament** consists of 39 books, originally written primarily in Hebrew. They tell the story of God and his people from about 2000 B.C. through about 400 B.C.

### **Books of the Law**

*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy*

- "Prehistory" – Genesis 1-11
- Abraham & Sarah – 1800 B.C.[Genesis 12]
- Isaac & Rebekah
- Jacob (re-named "Israel"; father of 12 sons/tribes)
- Joseph (family in Egypt 400 years until Moses)
- Moses & The Exodus – 1250 B.C. [Exodus-Deuteronomy]

### **History of Israel**

*Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*

- 1200 to 1020 B.C. – Conquest of Promised Land (Judges)
- 1020 - 922 B.C. – United Kingdom (First three kings: Saul, David, Solomon)
- 922 B.C. – 587 B.C. – Divided Kingdom
  - Jerusalem is the capital and Solomon builds the Temple as a center for worship.
  - Northern Kingdom called "Israel" included Ten Tribes. It's capital city was Samaria.
  - Southern Kingdom called "Judah" included Two Tribes. It's capital city was Jerusalem.
- 722 to 538 B.C. – The Exile
  - Israel – Conquered by Assyria (722 B.C.)
  - Judah – Conquered by Babylon (587 B.C.)
- 538 B.C. – Return from Exile
  - Cyrus, ruler of Persia allows the Jews to

- return to Israel in 538 B.C.
- They are eventually conquered by the Greeks and Romans.

### Poetry Books

*Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*

- These books were written in the Golden Age of Israel (United Kingdom) around 1000 B.C. Psalms is like our hymn book.

### Major and Minor Prophets

*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*

- Prophet exist side-by-side with .Kings.

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### Gospels

*Mark, Matthew, Luke and John*

### History

*Acts of the Apostles*

### Letters from Paul and Others

*Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, Jude*

### End Time Prophecy

*Revelation*

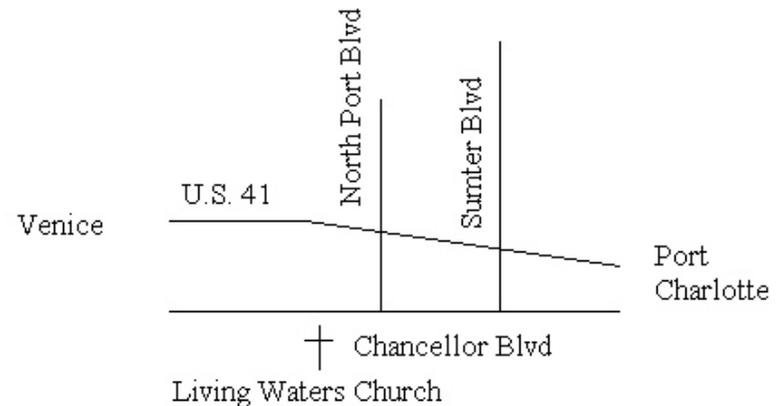
## Living Waters Lutheran Church

**Our Motto:** Share Christ

**Our Vision:** People Sharing God's Love By Praising God and Serving the Community

### Our Core Values:

- Love God and Neighbor
- God's Will, Not Our Own
- Good Stewardship
- Openness to Change and New Ideas
- Flexibility



## Living Waters Lutheran Church

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