

WHAT IS LUTHERAN?

The Lutheran Church traces its doctrines to Martin Luther, who started the Protestant Reformation, resulting in Protestantism.

Lutherans share a common faith with other Christians. They accept the Bible as the true source of Christian love, guidance, and doctrine. They accept the same ancient creeds. But they also proclaim God's message by emphasizing justification by faith, teaching that a person is not to live according to a formula of do's and don'ts, but in the freedom of Christian love, and not confusing law and gospel.

WHO WAS MARTIN LUTHER?

Martin Luther was the leader of the Protestant Reformation during the early 1500s. His teachings became the cornerstone of the church that bears his name. The Augsburg Confession was a document that meant to explain Luther's position.

LUTHERANS CELEBRATE TWO SACRAMENTS...

BAPTISM – Each Christian is baptized, many as infants, in order to mark the death of the sinful man in us and the rebirth into holy life – Christ's life.

LORD'S SUPPER – the Body and Blood of Christ borne by the bread and wine in Holy Communion.

HOW LUTHERANS VIEW SALVATION...

- All humanity is sinful.
- Humanity is incapable of rising out of its sinful state on its own.
- All who sin are under the wrath of God and are subject to His just and righteous punishment.
- God's gift of grace is the establishment of faith in Jesus Christ.
- God elects the faithful, declaring them just and righteous and forgiving

LUTHERAN BODIES

While there are more than 27 recognized Lutheran bodies in America, the largest are:

ELCA – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LCMS – Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

WELS – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

WHERE DID LUTHERANS COME FROM?

During the 1500's political, economic and social changes, together with new religious doctrines and practices, formed a true "reformation" in German life.

The promise of religious liberty drew many Lutherans to America. The earliest and largest groups of Lutheran immigrants came from Germany and Scandinavia.

In 1815, there were already 650 Lutheran congregations and a theological seminary in the United States. Lutherans place an emphasis on higher education.

In 1840, newly arrived Lutheran immigrants who settled in the Midwest organized new synods.

The 20th Century brought growth toward church unity among the various synods. Many independent church groups merged to form a more unified Lutheran church.

LUTHERANS AND MUSIC

Music is a big part of a traditional Lutheran service. Lutheran hymns are often known as chorales, and Luther himself wrote many of them, including "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Many churches have active music ministries including choirs, bell choirs and children's choirs.

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE...

CREATION – Lutherans believe that God is Creator of the universe. Its dimensions of space and time are not something God made once and then left alone. God is, rather, continually creating, calling into being each moment of each day.

The **BIBLE** is the Word of God – absolute truth; it shows God in action. 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.

JESUS is God's son, chosen 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. 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.