



What is a Lutheran ?

Compiled By Rev. Dan Domke

The writing in quotes and definitions in quotes come from the Rev. Dr. Alvin Barry's "What About Being Lutheran". Everything else is written or borrowed from unknown sources by Pastor Dan Domke

We do not worship Martin Luther or Philip Melancthon

Luther



Melancthon



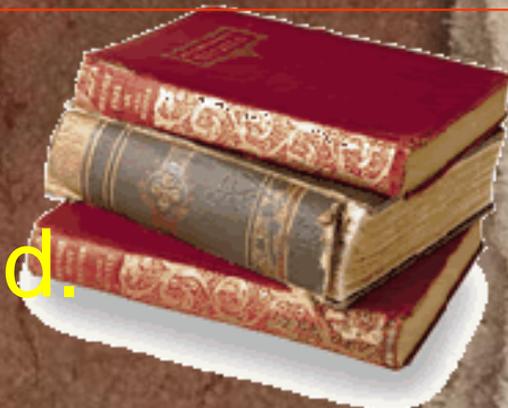
What is a Lutheran? A Lutheran is
one who ...

Is a Christian, who believes in and
trust's in Christ as their Savior.

Second....he or she...

Believes the Bible to be the Word of
God completely, totally and word for
word. Third...

Believes both the Old and New
Testaments to be the Word of God.



What sets a Lutheran apart from other Christians?

- A Lutheran Christian is set apart from other Christians in that we believe that Christ is the center of the Old and New Testament. We are committed to the Scriptures of first importance and then to the Lutheran Confessions.



What are the Lutheran Confessions

- For the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, we accept the unaltered Book of Concord of 1580 only.

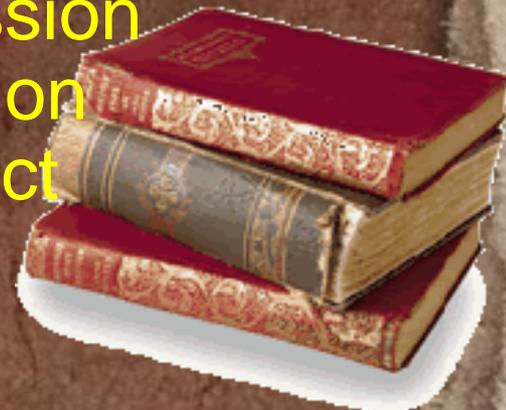
Which include the following:



Augsburg Confession and the Apology

“What is the Augsburg Confession and the Apology for the Augsburg Confession?”

“In the year 1530, the Lutherans were required to present their confession of faith before the emperor in Augsburg, Germany. Philip Melancthon wrote the Augsburg Confession and it was read before the imperial court on June 30, 1530 (June 25, 1530 the correct date).



Augsburg Confession and the Apology

“One year later, the Lutherans presented their defense of the Augsburg Confession, which is what "apology" here means. It too was written by Philip Melanchthon. The largest document in the Book of Concord, its longest chapter, is devoted to the most important truth of the Christian faith: the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.”



Large and Small Catechisms

• “What are these? Martin Luther realized early on how desperately ignorant the laity and clergy of his day were when it came to even the most basic truths of the Christian faith. Around 1529, he produced two small handbooks to help pastors and the heads of families teach the faith.”



Large and Small Catechisms

- “The Small Catechism and the Large Catechism are organized around six topics: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. So universally accepted were these magnificent doctrinal summaries by Luther, that they were included as part of the Book of Concord.”



Smalcald Articles and the Treatise on the Primacy of the Pope

- “In 1537, Martin Luther was asked to prepare a statement of Lutheran belief for use at a church council, if it was called. Luther's bold and vigorous confession of faith was later incorporated into the Book of Concord. It was presented to a group of Lutheran rulers meeting in the town of Smalcald. Philip Melanchthon was asked to expand on the subject of the Roman pope and did so in his treatise, which also was included in the Book of Concord.”



Formula of Concord

- “After Luther's death in 1546, significant controversies broke out in the Lutheran Church. After much debate and struggle, the Formula of Concord in 1577 put an end to these doctrinal controversies and the Lutheran Church was able to move ahead united in what it believed, taught and confessed.” ...



Formula of Concord

- “In 1580, all the confessional writings mentioned here were gathered into a single volume, the Book of Concord. Concord is a word that means, “harmony”.



The Epitome

- “The Formula of Concord was summarized in a version known as the “Epitome” of the Formula of Concord. This document too is included in the Book of Concord.”



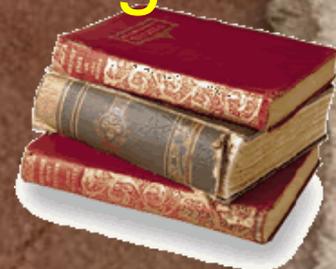
“What is the connection between the Bible and the Confessions?”

- “We confess that, ‘The Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine’ (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 9). What the Bible asserts, God asserts. What the Bible commands, God commands. The authority of the Scriptures is complete, certain and final. The Scriptures are accepted by the Lutheran Confessions as the actual Word of God.”



What is the connection between the Bible and the Confessions?

- “The Lutheran Confessions are the “basis, rule, and norm indicating how all doctrines should be judged in conformity with the Word of God” (FC SD RN). Because the Confessions are in complete doctrinal agreement with the written Word of God, they serve as the standard in the Lutheran Church to determine what is faithful Biblical teaching, insofar as that teaching is addressed in the Confessions.”



What is the main point of the Lutheran Confessions?

The Lutheran Reformation was not a "revolt," but rather began as a sincere expression of concern with the false and misleading teachings, which, unfortunately, even to this very day, obscure the glory and merit of Jesus Christ. What motivated Luther was a zealous concern about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here is how the Lutheran Confessions explain what the Gospel is all about:



What is the main point of the Lutheran Confessions?

- Human beings have not kept the law of God but have transgressed it. Their corrupted human nature, thoughts, words, and deeds battle against the law. For this reason they are subject to God's wrath, to death and all temporal afflictions, and to the punishment of the fires of hell. As a result, the Gospel, in its strict sense, teaches what people should believe, namely, that they receive from God the forgiveness of sins; that is, that the Son of God,



What is the main point of the Lutheran Confessions?

- our Lord Christ, has taken upon Himself the curse of the law and borne it, atoned and paid for all our sins; that through Him alone we are restored to God's grace, obtain the forgiveness of sins through faith and are delivered from death and all the punishments of our sins and are saved eternally. . . . It is good news, joyous news, that God does not want to punish sin but to forgive it for Christ's sake (FC SD, V, 20).



Being a Lutheran is Defined by the Three Sola's

- Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone
- Sola Gratia – Grace Alone - Gospel Alone is Christ Alone - Christocentric
- Sola Fide – Faith Alone - Flows from Sola Gratia. The two are side by side.

See Eph. 2: 8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—”

Being a Lutheran is defined by, Two Principles of the Lutheran Church

1) Formal Principle:

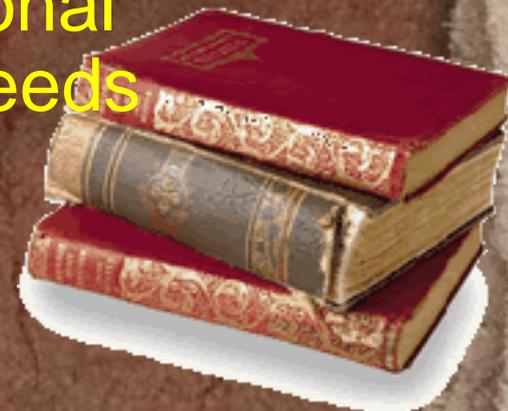
Sola Scriptura – Scripture is the source and norm of all Christian Doctrine.

The Two Principles of the Lutheran Church

2) Material Principle: Is the doctrine of 'Justification', or by faith alone in what Christ has done on the cross, that we are saved. We see justification as the central teaching of the scriptures.

Confessional Standard

- ARTICLE IV - CONFESSIONAL STANDARD
- This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, verbally inspired, and acknowledges and accepts all the Confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the (Unaltered) Book of Concord of the year 1580 to be the true and genuine exposition of the doctrines of the Bible. These Confessional Writings are: the three Ecumenical Creeds



Confessional Standard

- (1. Apostles, 2. Nicene and 3. Athanasian), the 4. Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the 5. Apology of the Augsburg confession, the 6. Smalcald Articles, 7. Luther's Large and 8. Small Catechisms, and the 9. Formula of Concord.
 - From: First Evangelical Lutheran Church's Constitution



What is a "confessional" Lutheran?

- The word "confession" is used in a variety of ways, but when we speak of a "confessional" Lutheran we mean a Lutheran who declares to the world his faith and most deeply held belief and conviction, in harmony with the documents contained in the Book of Concord. You will catch the spirit of confessional Lutheranism in these, the last words written in the Book of Concord:



What is a "confessional" Lutheran?

- Therefore, it is our intent to give witness before God and all Christendom, among those who are alive today and those who will come after us, that the explanation here set forth regarding all the controversial articles of faith which we have addressed and explained--and no other explanation--is our teaching, faith, and confession.



What is a "confessional" Lutheran?

- In it we shall appear before the judgment throne of Jesus Christ, by God's grace, with fearless hearts and thus give account of our faith, and we will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it. Instead, on the strength of God's grace, we intend to abide by this confession (FC SD, XII, 40).



What is an "unconditional subscription" to the Confessions?

- Confessional Lutheran pastors are required to "subscribe" unconditionally to the Lutheran Confessions because they are a pure exposition of the Word of God. This is the way our pastors, and every layman who confesses his belief in the Small Catechism, is able with great joy and without reservation or qualification to say what it is that he believes to be the truth of God's Word.



What is an "unconditional subscription" to the Confessions?

- Dr. C. F. W. Walther, the Missouri Synod's first president, explained the meaning of an unconditional confessional subscription in words as clear and poignant today as they were then:



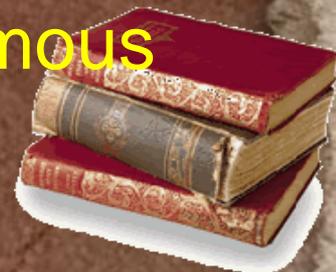
What is an "unconditional subscription" to the Confessions?

- An unconditional subscription is the solemn declaration which the individual who wants to serve the church makes under oath that he accepts the doctrinal content of our Lutheran Confessions, because he recognizes the fact that they are in full agreement with Scripture and do not militate against Scripture in any point, whether the point be of major or minor importance; and that he therefore heartily believes in this divine truth and is determined to preach this doctrine.



So what is it to be a Lutheran?

- “Being a Lutheran is being a person who believes the truths of God's Word, the Holy Bible, as they are correctly explained and taught in the Book of Concord. To do so is to confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Genuine Lutherans, confessional Lutherans, dare to insist that "All doctrines should conform to the standards [the Lutheran Confessions] set forth above. Whatever is contrary to them should be rejected and condemned as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith" (FC Ep. RN, 6).



So what is it to be a Lutheran?

- “Such a statement may strike some as boastful. But it is not; rather, it is an expression of the Spirit-led confidence that moves us to speak of our faith before the world.”



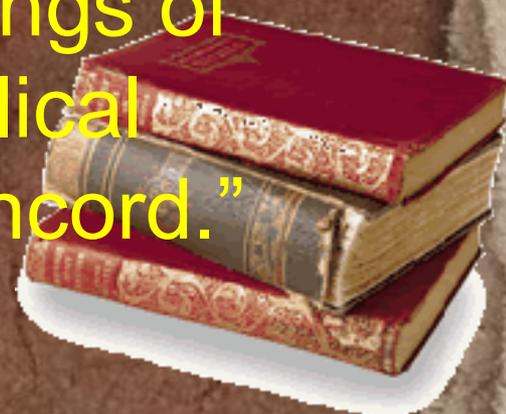
So what is it to be a Lutheran?

- “To be a confessional Lutheran is to be one who honors the Word of God. That word makes it clear that it is God's desire for His church to be in agreement about doctrine, and to be of one mind, living at peace with one another (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11).”



So what is it to be a Lutheran?

- “It is for that reason that we so treasure the precious confession of Christian truth that we have in the Book of Concord. For Confessional Lutherans, there is no other collection of documents, or statements or books that so clearly, accurately and comfortingly presents the teachings of God's Word and reveals the Biblical Gospel as does our Book of Concord.”



So what is it to be a Lutheran?

- “Hand-in-hand with our commitment to pure teaching and confession of the faith, is, and always must be, our equally strong commitment to reaching out boldly with the Gospel and speaking God's truth to the world. That is what "confession" of the faith is all about, in the final analysis. Indeed, "It is written: I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak" (2 Cor. 4:13). This is what it means to be a Lutheran.”



The Lutheran Commitment

- We are committed to the Lutheran Confessions, not because they are inspired like the Bible but that they are the correct exposition (interpretation) of the scriptures, and confess the Christian Faith.
- We will talk about something called Confessional Subscription later. Understanding Confessional Subscription is important both for Lutheran Clergy, all called workers and also the Laity.



What is a Lutheran? A Lutheran is one who ...

- "... believes, teaches and confesses the truths of God's Word as they are summarized and confessed in the Book of Concord."
- The 'Book of Concord' is the Lutheran Confessions



Vows...

Pastoral Vows: “Perhaps you have attended an ordination of a pastor and heard him promise that he will perform the duties of his office in accord with the Lutheran Confessions?”

New Members Vows: When people are received into membership into a Lutheran congregation through confirmation they are asked if they confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as they have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true.



Pastor's Vows

- In the presence of this congregation and before our Lord God to whom you must give account now and at the Last Day, I now ask you:
- Do you acknowledge that the Lord has called you through His Church into the ministry of Word and Sacrament?
- **R** I do.
- **P** Do you believe and confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- **R** Yes, I believe and confess the canonical Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Taken from the New LSB – Agenda – LCMS - 2006

Pastor's Vows

- **P** Do you believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?
- **R** Yes, I believe and confess the three Creeds because they are in accord with the Word of God. I also reject all the errors they condemn.

Pastor's Vows

- **P** Do you confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord—as these are contained in the 1580 Book of Concord—are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith?
- **R** Yes, I make these Confessions my own because they are in accord with the Word of God.

Pastor's Vow's

- **P** Do you promise that you will perform the duties of your office in accordance with these Confessions, and that all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with Holy Scripture and with these Confessions?
- **R** Yes, I promise with the help of God.

Pastor's Vow's

- **P** Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying, will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living?
- **R** Yes, I will with the help of God.

Pastor's Vows

- **P** Finally, will you honor and adorn the office of the holy ministry with a holy life? Will you be diligent in study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions? And will you be constant in prayer for those under your pastoral care?
- **R** I will, the Lord helping me through the power and grace of His Holy Spirit.

New Members-Disciples - Vows

When people are received into membership into a Lutheran congregation through confirmation they are asked if they confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as they have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true.



The Promises of the New Member/Disciple

- ...I now ask you in the presence of God and of this congregation: Do you accept and confess that the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as you have learned to know them [from the Small Catechism], are faithful and true to the Word of God? If so, answer: I do.
- I do.
- As a member of this Church, do you intend to continue in the confession of this Church, attend corporate worship, make diligent use of the means of grace, and lead a righteous and godly life? If so, answer: I do so intend with the help of God.



Promises are Vows

- These solemn promises indicate to us just how important the Lutheran Confessions are for our church. Let's take a look at the various items contained in the Book of Concord and then we will talk about why the Lutheran Confessions are so important for being a Lutheran.



• **What does it mean to be a Lutheran in the Twenty-first Century?**



Gospel

- **1. The Gospel is the good news that God has accomplished everything necessary for the salvation of the world through the life and death of Jesus Christ in the place of sinners (the atonement) and His resurrection from the dead.**



Gospel

- a. **We believe that through the Gospel God's grace extends to all people. We reject any limitations of the Gospel which suggest that Jesus has not died for all or that Jesus does not desire all to know Him.**



Gospel

b. We believe that through the Gospel God's grace offers and gives all that is necessary for salvation. We reject any limitations of the Gospel which suggest that the atoning work of Christ is not sufficient in itself to save or that good news of Christ does not work salvation, but that some human efforts, works, commitment, choice, prayer, desire, willingness, openness, feelings, experiences, etc. must be added

Gospel

c. We believe that salvation is found only in our Lord Jesus Christ. We reject the godless idea that our heavenly Father has or may have provided other saviors or other avenues of salvation.



Gospel

d. We believe that God favorably hears only the prayers of those who believe in Jesus Christ as their savior. We reject the godless idea that the true God favorably hears the prayers of those who do not know Jesus.

Gospel

- **2. The Gospel, in its proper and narrow sense, is always a pronouncement and bestowal of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's atonement.**

Gospel

- a. We believe that the Gospel is the means by which God offers, gives and bestows the forgiveness of Christ. We reject the idea that the Gospel is merely information or facts upon which the sinner must then act.



Gospel

b. We believe that the Gospel is God's free gift to all and the all-sufficient means to bring those who sin against God's law to saving faith. We reject the idea that God absolves apart from the Gospel of Christ.

Gospel

- **3. The Gospel is the forgiving Word of Christ and the saving Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**



Gospel

a. We believe that both Word and Sacraments provide all of the gifts of Christ's Grace.

We reject as unchristian the idea that sinners cannot rely on their Baptism or the Lord's Supper for consolation and assurance of salvation.



Gospel

b. We believe that the Sacraments are Gospel. We reject the idea that the Sacraments are merely testimonies to the Gospel, supplemental to the Gospel, or additions to the Gospel.

Gospel

c. We believe that everything that comforts or offers the favor and grace of God to those who sin against God's Law is the Gospel which is a good and joyful message that God does not wish to punish sins, but, for Christ's sake, forgives them.

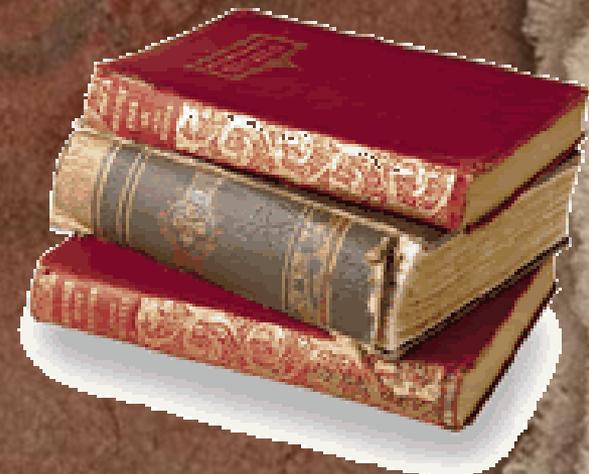
Gospel

c. cont':

We reject the idea that such comfort, favor and grace can be assured anyone outside of Christ's atoning work offered and delivered in the Word and Sacraments.

Gospel

- **4. The Holy Spirit employs only the Gospel (the forgiving Word of Christ and the saving Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) to give the forgiveness of sins and to create faith.**



Gospel

- a. We believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the gift of the Holy Spirit, created, increased, sustained and strengthened by means of the Gospel. We reject the idea that the works or commitment of the believer can create, increase, sustain or strengthen faith.



Gospel

b. We believe that all who have the gift of faith in Christ receive forgiveness. We reject the idea that the Holy Spirit creates faith without giving forgiveness or absolving the sinner.

Gospel

c. We believe that no one by his own reason or strength can believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. We reject the idea that human desire, will, or decision can bring an unbeliever to Christ or that any unbeliever is truly seeking the one true God.

Gospel

d. We believe that the Word and Sacraments are the only and all-sufficient means by which God gives His blessings of grace and eternal life. We reject the idea that God creates or increases faith through any “second blessing” or through miracles, signs or any special gifts other than the Word and Sacraments.



Gospel

e. We believe that the power of the Gospel is from God alone. We reject the idea that the power of the Gospel depends on the speaker, the hearer, or the mission attitude of the congregation in which it is spoken.

If the mission attitude of the congregation is truly founded on the pure gospel we are ok. It is the gospel that saves, not the attitude or bringing people into membership. The church is to be making disciples by means of baptizing (sacrament) and then teaching (Matt. 28:20).

Justification

5. We believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all people, announced only through the Gospel, and received only through faith. We reject any expressions that God has not justified the entire world through the atonement of Christ.



Justification

- a. We believe that all doctrine of the church is understood as it relates to the doctrine of justification. We also believe that the doctrine of justification is both drawn from the scriptures and provides special light in understanding the entire Scriptures. We reject any and all expressions that suggest that any other article of Christian doctrine is central to our understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

Justification

- b. We believe that the central article of the Christian faith is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith for Christ's sake. We reject any expressions that suggest that any other doctrine should replace it.

Mission and Ministry

- **6. The mission and ministry of the church is the proclamation, teaching and declaration of the Gospel - God's gracious acts for us in Christ - through Word and Sacrament.**



Mission and Ministry

- a. We believe that the mission and ministry of the church is to forgive sins through Word and Sacrament. We reject as harmful to the Gospel any definition of mission or ministry that states or implies that the mission of the church can be accomplished without this forgiveness.



Mission and Ministry

- b. We believe that mission work is a clear and full proclamation of the Gospel. We reject the idea that mission work can be done merely by “being present.” Likewise we reject the idea of a “ministry of presence” as though others are blessed by their mere proximity to Christians.

Office of the Ministry

- **7. God has established the office of the ministry to forgive sins and create faith in Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.**
- **See Acts 1: 1, (Jesus began we continue the ministry in His Name) John 20:20 established the 'Office of the Ministry'. See also, Acts 6:1ff for the priorities for the ministry**

Office of the Ministry

- a. We believe that the Gospel is powerful and effective because the Holy Spirit always works through it. We reject as unchristian the idea that the power of the Gospel depends upon anything more than the gospel itself.

Office of the Ministry

b. We believe that God calls pastors to do the work of the ministry through the call of the church and ratifies His call through the ordination of the church. We reject the idea that the ministry is an indifferent or free matter that the church may or may not use.

Office of the Ministry

c. We believe that the Divine call of the pastor is to proclaim, preach and teach Christ, forgive sins and administer His Sacraments. We reject the idea that the authority of the ministry has to do with anything other than proclaiming and teaching the Word and administering the Sacraments.

Office of the Ministry

d. We believe that the holy ministry or pastoral office is an office distinct from the priesthood of all believers. We reject the idea that every Christian is a minister of the Gospel.

Ministry of the Word

- **8. Since the ministry of the Word is conferred upon pastors by God through the church, only the minister of the Gospel (the Pastor) may publicly carry out the duties of the office of the ministry.**

Ministry of the Word

- a. We believe that only those called as pastors may engage in tasks specifically assigned by God to the pastor, such as preaching, baptizing, and consecrating the sacrament. We reject the idea that any lay person, except under extreme circumstances, may carry out the duties of the pastoral office.

Ministry of the Word

b. We believe that the functions of the pastoral office are distinct from the priesthood of all believers. When those who are not pastors behave as pastors and perform distinctly pastoral functions they are not, thereby, in the office of the ministry. We reject the idea that the pastoral office is only one form of the office of the ministry. We reject the idea that one becomes a minister by merely performing the functions of the ministry.

Justification and the Mission of the Church

- **9. While the mission and ministry of the church is a necessary reflection of the atonement and the church's faith in the Gospel, this work (like loving people, or helping the poor this is a good work, but not mission) of the church does not replace the doctrine of justification as the central article of the Christian faith.**

Justification and the Mission of the Church

- a. We believe that the Great Commission is the teaching and application of the doctrine of justification by grace to a lost and dying world through Word and Sacrament ministry. We reject the idea that we have properly carried out the Great Commission when we have failed to teach the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone.

Justification and the Mission of the Church

- b. We believe that God gives His blessings out of His grace and goodness apart from our actions or attitudes. We reject the idea that God blesses churches in proportion to their vision, techniques and strategies. We also reject the idea we can, by use of such techniques, cause God to bless us in any way other than He has promised.

Justification and the Mission of the Church

c. We believe that true Christian mission and ministry is grounded in the acceptance and confession of the doctrine of justification by grace as taught in the Bible and confessed by the Lutheran Confessions. We reject as false and unfaithful any mission and ministry that is not based upon a truthful proclamation of the doctrine of justification. We also reject as harmful to the mission of the church any ministry with or acceptance of those church bodies and organizations that do not confess the Lutheran and Biblical doctrine of justification by grace alone.

Vocation

- **10. All Christians serve God according to their various vocations.**

Vocation

Where we serve our neighbor in Love.

- a. We believe that God places each person in a context of relationships expressed in various roles, called vocations such as father, mother, teacher, student, pastor, hearer, employer, employee, et cetera. God uses these vocations to create and preserve human life and to bestow His blessings. In our vocations we serve the needs of our neighbors and are served by them in return. We believe that every person has important and valuable vocations that are God-given. We reject the idea that some vocations (e.g. pastor or teacher) are more important to God or give a higher standing before God.

Vocation

Where we serve God in Loving response to the Gospel.

b. We believe that the biblical image of the royal priesthood stresses that all Christians are to bring sacrifices acceptable to God through their Lord Jesus Christ in their vocation.

Vocation

c. We believe that both the Christian Church and individual Christians in their vocations show kindness, mercy and charity to all. We reject the idea that such acts of mercy are the unique and saving mission or ministry of the Church. We further reject the idea that these works are meritorious before God.

Evangelism

- **11. All Christians have the joyful opportunity and responsibility to speak the Gospel of Christ to others.**

Evangelism

- a. We believe that God calls upon all Christians to show forth the glories of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, which includes speaking of Christ with friends, neighbors, relatives, and inquirers.

Evangelism

b. We believe that the power of the Word is from God and not dependent upon the one who speaks it. We reject the idea that the Word of God forgives sins only when spoken by pastors.

Evangelism

c. We believe that Christ is our all-sufficient High Priest, and that all Christians are members of the royal priesthood. We reject the idea that only pastors are priests.

Evangelism

d. We believe that the pastoral office is established by God and distinct from the royal priesthood. We reject the idea that all priests are pastors.

The Church

- **12. The Church (una sancta) is all those and only those whom God by the Gospel and Sacraments has brought to faith in Jesus Christ. (The invisible church).**

The Church

- a. We believe that the unity of the Christian Church consists in the common faith in Christ as Savior. We reject the idea that there is any spiritual unity apart from faith in Christ or that we can rightfully say or imply that others who reject Christ are our spiritual brothers and sisters.

The Church

b. We believe that the Christian Church is God's creation alone. We reject the idea that the unity of the church is established, maintained or guaranteed by any human efforts, church programs, human rites (confirmation-installation of church officers, lighting candles, having banners) , rituals (installations, etc again, dedication of items for the church) or decisions regardless of how praiseworthy these might be.

Fellowship

- **13. Fellowship between Christians is based solely upon a common confession of the doctrine of the Gospel in all its various articles.**

Fellowship

- a. We believe that the only basis and standard for determining and judging doctrine is Holy Scriptures. The Book of Concord is a reliable standard of judging doctrine because it is faithful to the Bible. We reject the unchristian practice of pitting the Bible against the Lutheran Confessions as if belief in one does not involve confession of the other. We also reject as unlutheran the claim to rely upon the Book of Concord only insofar as or when it is consistent with the Bible.

Fellowship

b. We believe that true fellowship is God's creation and finds its external expression where the Gospel is preached according to a pure understanding and where the sacraments are rightly administered. We reject the idea that fellowship can exist between churches that do not agree on the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles.

Fellowship

- **14. Any godly expression of Christian fellowship is based upon agreement in all Christian doctrine.**

Fellowship

- a. **We believe that the Sacrament of Holy Communion is the Sacrament of unity and the most intimate expression of Christian fellowship. Common participation in the Sacrament is a public confession of complete agreement on all Christian doctrine. We reject the idea that church fellowship is based on common endeavors, love, concerns, zeal or any human emotion or action rather than a common confession of the Gospel in all its articles.**

Fellowship

b. We believe that closed communion (communion with only those who are members of churches which confess all the Christian doctrine as taught in the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions) is a god-pleasing practice which protects the weak and faithless from judgment. We reject as dishonest, uncaring and sinful the practice of open communion where people commune together who do not confess the same doctrine of the Gospel.

Fellowship

c. We believe that when Christians are united in a common confession of the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles they have a joyful responsibility to reflect this unity of doctrine through declared altar fellowship with each other.

Fellowship

d. We believe that responsible pastors determine that those who commune at their altars, except in very rare circumstances, are members of churches or synods that are in declared fellowship with theirs. We reject as sinful the practice of those pastors who regularly give communion to people who are not members in good standing of congregations or synods in such declared fellowship.

Fellowship

e. We believe that pastors give a clear witness to the Gospel by participating in those worship, prayer, or sacramental services only where the Gospel is purely taught. We reject the practice of pastors participating in services with pastors or clerics of churches or religious groups in which the Gospel is not taught and confessed purely.

Man and Woman

- **15. Because God made mankind male and female, human identity in this life is inseparable from one's sex. God blesses both men and women with gifts, skills and talents for use in the family, the world and the church.**

Man, Woman - Marriage

- a. **We believe that pious and godly men and women accept the role and vocation that God has given them. We reject any expressions which suggest that sex distinctions are irrelevant, superficial or of no concern to the church.**

Man and Woman

- b. We believe that every man and woman ought to thank God for their sex and all of its functions. We reject as perverse and unchristian the godless idea that men or women may have sexual relations with members of their own sex or marry members of their own sex.

Man and Woman

c. We believe that God has prescribed sexual activity for a husband and his wife. We reject as unchristian the practice of engaging in sexual activity outside the bond of holy matrimony and we reject and condemn the practice of males and females "living together" without holy matrimony.

Qualifications for Ministry

- **16. God alone determines the qualifications for the pastoral ministry. Among the many qualifications for this office is the requirement that the pastor be a man.**

Distinctive Roles for men and women in the ministry.

- a. We believe that God has created distinctive roles for men and women. In the Holy Scriptures, God clearly states that the office of pastor with its distinctive functions is reserved for men. We reject as sinful the idea that the church may decide on its own to make women pastors or to give to women the distinctive functions of men or of pastors.

Distinctive Roles for men and women – the Office of Pastor.

b. We believe that God has created the office of pastor and He alone determines the qualifications of those who hold it. We reject the recent innovative and unscriptural idea that God calls women into the pastoral ministry. We also reject the practice of referring to any woman as pastor, reverend, chaplain, or any other title ascribed to a holder of the office of the holy ministry.

Distinctive Roles for men and women in the office of the ministry.

- c. We believe that we have fellowship only with those churches that rightly proclaim and practice the Gospel in all its articles. We reject that fellowship exists with churches or congregations which promote the unscriptural ordination of women or hold that women may serve as pastors or carry out the distinctive roles of pastors.

The Divine Service

- **17. The worship service is primarily God serving His people the forgiveness of sins through Word and Sacrament. The service is, therefore, properly and accurately called the divine service.**

The Divine Service

- a. **We believe that initiative and motivation in offering the Divine Service is found with God and not man. It is His desire to impart His salvation to all people. We reject the idea that the purpose of the service is primarily to motivate people, to enable “seekers” to find God, to facilitate spiritual experience, to offer God’s people a chance to praise Him or to serve as a “staging area” in which to motivated Christians to do the work of the church.**

The Divine Service

b. We believe that the highest expression of Christian worship occurs where and when Christ bestows His forgiveness through both Word and Sacrament. We reject the idea that the Sunday Service without both Word and Sacrament is preferable to or as complete as the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament.

Worship Styles

- **18. While uniformity of worship forms is not necessary between congregations, it is highly desirable.**

Worship Styles

- a. **We believe that the unity of doctrine in the church should be expressed through a unity in worship forms and practice. We believe that no local congregation or pastor has or should exercise the unilateral or autonomous right to determine the structure of the divine service without regard for the whole church.**

Worship Styles

b. We believe Christian congregations should be encouraged to use all usual liturgical customs that have been handed down to us by previous generations and that properly proclaim the Gospel. We reject as threatening to the unity of the church the practice of individual pastors and congregations regularly changing or permanently discarding liturgical forms or orders of service in ways that have not gained acceptance in the church at large.

The Divine Service

c. We believe that faithful proclamation of the Gospel requires that only doctrinally sound materials be used in worship. We reject as sinful the practice of individual pastors and congregations employing prayers, readings, songs, hymns, or any forms that are not doctrinally sound.

**First Evangelical Lutheran
Church, Grand Rapids, MN
- 2005**

BY PASTOR DANIEL M. DOMKE

**Mount Calvary Evangelical
Lutheran Church – Huron,
South Dakota, 2017**

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