

Statement of Faith

Background

The Christian church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church through the ages due to the proliferation of false teachings and heresy, has found it necessary to restate the basic beliefs and doctrines of the Christian religion as found in the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. This process began with the 3 ecumenical creeds, and continued with the Book of Concord, 1580.

We have witnessed in America groups both large and small who call themselves Lutheran, yet their published and taught beliefs and actual practice say otherwise. We therefore must restate what true Christians believe, teach and confess as Lutherans as a testimony of our faithfulness.

Our desire is not to state anything new, but to reaffirm that which has been forgotten, neglected, or perhaps misunderstood about the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

This document should serve as a foundation for pulpit and altar fellowship discussions.

What We Believe

The Bible

The Bible is the verbally inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God and the only source and norm for all doctrine and teaching in God's church. (*Formula of Concord Epitome Introduction OF THE SUMMARY CONTENT, RULE, AND STANDARD*)

We would therefore reject the use of tradition or reason over and above God's Word.

The Lutheran Confessions

We agree with those Lutheran confessors who signed the *Book of Concord of 1580*. We accept that confession not in so far as (*quatenus*) but because (*quia*) it correctly presents the doctrine and teaching of God's living Word.

Controverted Issues

The Brief Statement (of 1932)

We affirm our agreement with The Brief Statement of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Order in Worship

Our understanding of Worship can be summarized by Article VII Of the Church in the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession Article XV Human Traditions 20-21, and the Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Article X Church Usages, 9-10.

The Church Growth Movement

We affirm *For the Sake of Christ's Commission: The Report of the Church Growth Study Committee of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, 2001*.

Church and Ministry

We affirm C.F.W. Walther's *Church and Ministry* (German, 1851, English, 1987) as a correct and useful exposition of the Lutheran and biblical truth on this subject.

Hierarchal Order

Whereas Popes and councils may err, we affirm the sole leader of our church to be Christ and His Living Word (John 1:1, 14). We have no head but Christ (Acts 5:29).

On page 507 in the *Concordia Triglotta – Treatise On The Power and Primacy of the Pope* it says, "In 1 Corinthians 3, 6, Paul makes ministers equal, and teaches that the Church is above the ministers. Hence superiority or lordship over the Church or the rest of the ministers is not ascribed to Peter [in preference to other apostles]. For he says thus: All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, i.e., let neither the other ministers nor Peter assume for themselves lordship or superiority over the Church; let them not burden the Church with traditions; let not the authority of any avail more than the Word [of God];"

The Role of Women

God through His Word has established definite and clearly distinctive roles for men and women in the Church and in the home. It is in accord with the biblical Order of Creation that women not exercise authority over men. (Genesis 2:18-25; Genesis 3:6, 16-17; I Corinthians 11:3-15; I Corinthians 14:33-34; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18; I Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 2:3-5; I Peter 3:1, 5)

We therefore reject the practice of women serving as elders, congregational presidents, or vice presidents, and other similar offices since such positions require the exercise of authority over men within the congregation. (I Timothy 2:11-13)

We reject the 1969 LCMS convention vote permitting women's suffrage in the Church—a change in the church's doctrine. Many of the arguments put forward supporting the ordination of women into the Holy Ministry are the same arguments put forward in defense of women's suffrage. We recognize how throughout church history, those churches that have implemented women's suffrage eventually ordained women into the pastoral office.

The Lords Supper

The Sacrament must not be given to the following:

1. Those who are openly ungodly and unrepentant, including those who take part in non-Christian religious worship.
2. Those who are unforgiving, refusing to be reconciled. They show thereby that they do not really believe that God forgives them either.
3. Those of a different confession of faith, since the Lord's Supper is a testimony of the unity of faith.
4. Those who are unable to examine themselves, such as infants, people who have not received proper instruction, or the unconscious.

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