

# Lutherans and Other Denominations

## Lutherans

### Welcome

Opening Prayer  
Course Overview

### Christian Denominations

*Question 1*      Percent of population  
*Question 2*      Percent of Christians  
*Question 3*      Denominations by size and faith  
*Question 4*      Religious bodies

### Lutheran History

October 31, 1517 - Martin Luther posted 95 Theses  
Intended for discussion among scholars  
1529 - Diet at Speier (Germany) said Roman Catholic faith was the only legal faith  
Leaders who followed Luther read a *Protestation*

Small & Large Catechisms - 1529  
Augsburg Confession - June 25, 1530  
Intended to show that the reformers were fully Christian  
First 21 (of 28) articles gave confession of ancient church  
*The Church of the Augsburg Confession*  
Luther - *Please do not use my name; do not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. ...*  
*The doctrine is not mine; I have not been crucified for anyone. ...*  
*Why should I, a poor mortal, give my meaningless name to Christ's children?*

Apology to the Augsburg Confession  
Smalcald Articles of Faith - 1537 Convention  
Formula of Concord - 1577  
Book of Concord - 1580

### Lutheran Doctrine

*Question 5* - Ephesians 2:8-9  
*Question 6* - Lutheran doctrine revolves around:  
*Sola gratia*  
*Sola fide*  
*Sola scriptura*

### Gospel

Luther - *The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel.*  
Galatians 1:8

Luther translated Bible to German so all could access God's truths  
Wrote catechisms & hymns to guide people; Set up elementary education system to teach Bible reading

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### Lutheran Sacraments

Definition of a sacrament:

*A sacred act ordained by God  
through which He brings grace to men  
through external means  
connected with His Word.*

Question 7 - Lutheran sacraments

Baptism

Word  
Benefit  
Man's part

Lord's Supper

Word  
Benefit  
True Presence - Body & blood are *in, with and under* the bread & wine  
Not symbolic or transubstantiation

### Lutherans in America

- 1619 - Lutheran Christmas Service on Hudson Bay
- 1649 - St. Matthew's Church of New York
- German settlers
  - Colonists asked European church for leadership
- 1741 - Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf
  - Moravians
- 1742 - Henry Melchior Muhlenberg
  - 1748 - Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania
- 1820 - General Synod
  - 1826 - Established Gettysburg Seminary
- 1830-1870 - Heavy immigration
  - 1870 - Lutherans were fourth largest Protestant group in America

### Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

- 1839 - Saxon Lutherans
- 1847 - German Evangelical Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States
  - Question 9

Evangelized immigrants until WW I, then started a large missionary program  
Takes Biblical warning on false doctrines to heart  
Romans 16:17  
Strong doctrine from uniform training of pastors

- 1974 - Controversy at St. Louis Seminary over nature of biblical authority
  - Seminex
- 1976 - Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches
  - Same doctrinal statement as LCMS
- 10<sup>th</sup> largest religious group in US

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### Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

#### Lutheran Church in America

History goes back to Muhlenberg and General Synod

General Synod split in 1860 (doctrine & Civil War), eventually brought back together

1962 - Merger of ULCA (General), Ev. Luth. Augustana (Swedish, Norwegian), Suomi (Finnish)

#### American Lutheran Church

Formed by mergers in 1930 (Ohio, Buffalo, Iowa) & 1960 (Norwegian)

1988 - ELCA formed by merger of ALC, LCA and AELC

6<sup>th</sup> largest religious group in US

### Other US Lutherans

About 7 other small Lutheran groups

Next largest is Wisconsin Synod (WELS)

More conservative than LCMS

*Question 8* - Ranking by size, age & staunch

### Lutheran Differences

*Question 10* - Lutheran Differences

#### History & Background

Ethnic Background - German, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish

ELCA - Many mergers since colonial times

LCMS - From immigrants fleeing liberal doctrines

#### Cooperation with Interdenominational Groups

ELCA - Participate in National & World Council of Churches, Accept Lodge members

LCMS - Avoids interaction with false doctrines

Lodges - Profess faith in an all encompassing God (for all religions) and emphasize works

#### Bible Interpretation

LCMS - Divinely Inspired

ELCA - Faithful Reporting

#### Lutheran Confessions

Apostles, Nicene & Athanasian Creeds

Large & Small Catechisms

Augsburg Confession & Apology of Augsburg Confession

Smalcald Articles

Formula of Concord

LCMS - This list correctly interprets the Bible and Christian life & faith.

ELCA - This list was correct in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. New confessions should be made today.

### Closing Prayer

*Class materials are available at [www.biblestoriesforadults.com/denominations](http://www.biblestoriesforadults.com/denominations)*

# Lutherans and Other Denominations

## Lutherans

### The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod - A Brief History (from www.lcms.org)

According to 1994 statistics, there are 5,672,815,000 people on planet earth. David B. Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1994 Update) reports that 33.6 percent or 1.9 billion are classified as in some sense Christian. Of these, slightly over a billion (1,034,322,000) or 54 percent are Roman Catholic and 187,582,000 million or 9.9 percent are Orthodox. The third largest grouping of Christians in this world is Lutheran, which as of 1993 numbers 58.5 million or 3 percent of the Christian population. Anglicans come in fourth with a total of approximately 56 million worldwide.

The world's 59 million Lutherans belong to 250 different autonomous Lutheran churches around the world. Not surprisingly, the largest numbers of Lutherans are to be found in Germany, the place where the Lutheran tradition made its beginning during the early part of the 16th century. There are 14.7 million Lutherans in Germany in 15 church bodies, 8.7 million in North America, 7.6 in Sweden, 4.6 in Finland, 4.5 in Denmark, 3.9 in Norway, and 2.4 million in Indonesia. There are 6.2 million Lutherans in Africa, the place where the Lutheran Church is growing most rapidly today, and 4.6 million Lutherans in Asia.

The 8.7 million Lutherans in North America belong to 21 different Lutheran bodies. The largest of these at 5.2 million is the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(ELCA\)](#), which came into being in 1988 as the result of a three way merger of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. This brings us to The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, which with 2,615,567 baptized members ranks as the second largest Lutheran church body in North America and the 11th largest denomination in the USA. The [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod \(WELS\)](#) has 421,189 members and is the third largest Lutheran Church in the USA.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod traces its origin to 750 Saxon immigrants who came to Missouri in 1839 seeking freedom from religious rationalism in Germany. Under the leadership of a young pastor named C. F. W. Walther, these German immigrants joined together with a number of pastors sent to America by Wilhelm Loehe in Neuendettelsau (Bavaria) to form "The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States." The first convention of the new synod was held in Chicago on April 25-May 6, 1847. Twelve pastors, with their congregations, adopted the constitution, and 10 other pastors added their signatures as advisory members, since their congregations had not yet voted to join. Of these 22 pastors, 4 lived in Missouri, 6 in Ohio, 5 in Indiana, 3 in Illinois, 2 in Michigan, and 2 in New York. The twelve original congregations which formed the Missouri Synod included about 3,000 persons. Dr. Walther was elected to serve as the first president of the new Synod. One hundred years later in 1947 the Synod officially changed its name to The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, which remained largely German in its make-up and even in language until the end of the First World War, grew dramatically during the latter part of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. In 1897, 50 years after its founding, the Synod reported a membership of 685,000. During the next 50 years, it more than doubled its membership. As of 1993, it reports a membership of 2.6 million members belonging to 6,218 congregations. The Synod has 10 colleges, two seminaries, 62 high schools and the nation's largest Protestant elementary school system with 1,786 elementary schools and preschools. Congregations and schools are served by 8,389 pastors, 9,951 parochial school teachers and numerous other full-time workers, such as deaconesses and directors of Christian education. While the Synod holds that the ordination of women to the office of pastor is contrary to the Scriptures, approximately 45 percent of its full-time professional church workers are women. The LCMS has congregations in all sections of the United States, but the heaviest concentration of its membership continues to lie in the Midwest.

Well known for its emphasis on Biblical doctrine and faithfulness to the historic Lutheran Confessions, the Synod also manifests an innovative spirit in seeking new ways of proclaiming the Gospel. Concordia Publishing House, whose Arch Book Series for children has sold more than 55 million copies, is the nation's fourth-largest Protestant publisher. A pioneer in radio and television work, the Synod operates the world's oldest religious radio station, KFUP, headquartered in St. Louis, Mo. Its program, "The Lutheran Hour," produced by the Synod's International Lutheran Layman's League, has been aired in North America since 1930, and Lutheran Hour programs are broadcast each week into more than 110 nations. Hispanic language broadcasts reach out to this fastest-growing minority. The League also continues to distribute "This is the Life," the longest-running dramatic series in the history of television, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1992. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), which came into being in 1942, serves as the Synod's auxiliary for women and has been a leader in supporting missionary outreach in many areas. The LWML also provided the initiative in 1989 for developing "Lifelight," a widely used in-depth Bible study series.

The Synod has a long history of reaching out to others. Black ministry, for example, has been a solid part of the Synod for more than 100 years. In fact, most African Americans who are Lutheran are members of the LCMS. In addition, a Library for the Blind produces sermons and devotional literature, and of the approximately 90 deaf congregations maintained by all religious denominations, over 50 are members of the LCMS.

In its forward-looking approach to doing the Lord's work by helping one's fellow human beings, the LCMS in 1980 became the first denomination in the United States to urge its members to donate body organs at death for transplant. The Synod holds a strong pro-life position and supports efforts calling for constitutional protection of all human life, including the unborn. With respect to the end of life, the Synod believes that the Scriptures teach that Christians are always to care for the dying, but never to aim to kill them. Therefore the LCMS strongly opposes euthanasia, but also believes that when the body's ability to sustain itself is no longer possible, and when doctors conclude that there is no hope for recovery, Christians may in good conscience forego the use of life support systems. While rejecting homosexual behavior as contrary to God's will, the Synod has also called for the development of a plan for ministry to homosexuals and their families.

Unlike many other churches, the LCMS has never been involved in a major merger. However, it was a member of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. until the Council went out of existence on January 1, 1988, with the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Internationally, the Synod conducts missions or maintains relations with churches in over 50 different countries. It is a member of the International Lutheran Council, but it does not belong to the Lutheran World Federation, to the National Council of Churches or to the World Council of Churches.

Following a decade of soul-searching and controversy that resulted in the walkout of most faculty members and students from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and the eventual departure of slightly more than 100,000 members (who formed the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches) in the early 1970s, the LCMS has reclaimed its historic confessional stance on the doctrine of the authority of Holy Scripture as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

In 1982 the Synod published a new hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*, and in May 1983 it dedicated its new International Center in the St. Louis suburb of Kirkwood, Mo. Dr. A. L. Barry, who served as the Synod's 11th president from 1992 to 2001, was called to his heavenly home on March 23. He was succeeded by Dr. Robert Kuhn, first vice president. At the synodical convention in July 2001, Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, president of the Texas District, was elected to a three-year term as the Synod's 13th president.

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