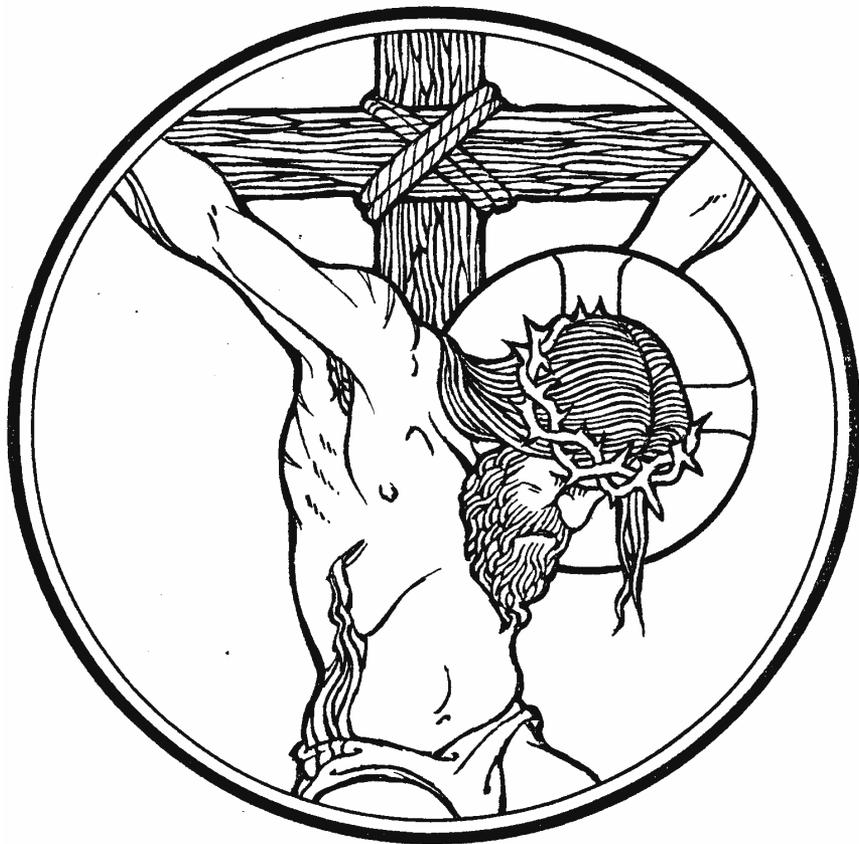


Our Churches Teach

*A Summary of Lutheran Teaching drawn from
the Augsburg Confession*



“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”

John 8:31-32

Immanuel Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. This means we are a confessional congregation that holds to the historic teachings of the Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord. For a brief synopsis of what that means we offer the following:

Our churches teach:

1. That God is Triune, that is, one God in three Persons and three Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed to us in the Old and New Testaments.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2 Corinthians 13:14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Bible Narratives: Gen. 1:1-3; Matt. 3:13-17.

Catechism: Apostles' Creed; 1st Commandment.

Liturgy: Invocation; Benediction

2. That all people are conceived and born with original sin. That is, we are all born with a heart opposed to the true God and in need of a Savior to rescue us.

Genesis 8:21 "And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Psalms 51:5 "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."

Bible Narratives: Gen. 3:1-24

Liturgy: Confession of Sins; Hymn 562

3. That Jesus is the true and only Son of God. He is fully God begotten from eternity. Yet, He chose to become fully man born of the Virgin Mary. We hold to both the full deity and full humanity of Jesus.

John 20:28 "Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

John 1:1-2 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Matthew 3:17 "...and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

Galatians 4:4-5 "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

Colossians 2:9 "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."

Bible Narratives: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20.

Catechism: The Creed, 2nd Article and Explanation.

4. That the forgiveness of sins is given to us by grace for Christ's sake. We do not and cannot obtain forgiveness by our own merits, works, goodness or decisions. Rather, God pronounces us forgiven for the sake of the life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

Genesis 15:6 "And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."

Ecclesiastes 7:20 "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins."

Galatians 3:10-11 "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is

evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

Galatians 5:4-5 "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Romans 3:22-24 "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 3:28 "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."

Bible Narratives: Luke 18:9-14 (The Publican and the Tax-Collector);

Catechism: The Creed, 2nd article explanation.

Liturgy: Absolution

5. The office of the Holy Ministry is given by God to the Church for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments. It is not an office created by human invention. It is an office that God chose to join to His Church to care for the souls of His people.

John 20:21-23 "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'"

John 21:15-17 "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved

because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

Ephesians 4:11-12 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

Acts 20:28 "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."

Romans 10:13-14 "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"

1 Peter 5:2 "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly."

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy."

Bible Narratives: Luke 5:1-11.

Liturgy: Absolution

6. That good works should be done by all Christians as fruits of faith. Good works cannot earn forgiveness. They are proof that faith is living and not dead.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Romans 3:31 “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.”

Matthew 3:8 “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.”

Matthew 7:19 “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

John 15:1-5 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

Bible Narratives: Luke 19:1-10; Matthew 25:32-46; John 8:1-11

Catechism: Ten Commandments

Liturgy: Luther's 10 Commandments Hymn (#581)

7. That the Church is the living body of Christ wherein He forgives sins and creates and sustains faith. It is God's will that the Church be the assembly of believers wherein the Gospel is preached and His sacraments are administered rightly.

Colossians 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

Romans 12:4-5 “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Ephesians 2:19-22 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Acts 2:42 “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Catechism Connection: Creed, 3rd Article “Communion of Saints”

8. That baptism is more than just a religious ritual. It actually gives and seals the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is not about our decision that we make for God, but His decision to come to us and claim us as His own. Our churches further teach that baptism is meant for "all nations," that is for all people of every age and place, including infants.

Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’.”

Titus 3:5 “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:26 “That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

Romans 6:3-4 “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Bible Narratives: Genesis 6-8; Exodus 14

Catechism: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Liturgy: Luther’s “Flood” Prayer; Baptismal Rite; Hymn 596

9. That the bread and wine of Lord's Supper are truly the body and blood of Christ and that the forgiveness of sins is given through the Sacrament to those who receive it in faith. The teaching that the bread and wine merely represent or symbolize the body and blood of Christ is rejected.

Matthew 26:26-28 "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

1 Corinthians 10:16 "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Bible Narratives: Exodus 12:1-27; Mark 8:1-9

Catechism: The Sacrament of the Altar

Liturgy: Service of the Sacrament; Hymn 618, 624

10. That confession of one's sins and receiving forgiveness for those sins from the hand of the pastor are a great blessing in the Church. Our churches do not teach that one has to enumerate all one's sins to be forgiven, but we do teach that Christ has given to the pastoral office the duty of dispensing His gifts of forgiveness to the congregation and her sheep.

Psalm 32:1-5 "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day

long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."

1 John 1:8-9 "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

John 20:22-23 "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'"

Bible Narratives: Luke 15:11-32; Matthew 9:1-8; 2 Samuel 11

Catechism: Confession

Liturgy: Individual Confession & Absolution; Hymn 608

11. That Christ will return to judge the living and dead. The teaching that His "second coming" will be for the purpose of setting up an earthly kingdom and not for the final judgment of all humanity is rejected.

Matthew 24:27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

Luke 21:27 "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."

Matthew 25:31-32 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before

him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

Bible Narratives: Genesis 6-8 (Noah and the Flood); Matt 25:1-13
Catechism: 2nd Article of the Creed.

12. That human will is in bondage to sin. We are certainly free to live, reason, and act according to our understanding and thought in all worldly matters. But where spiritual matters are concerned, our will is in bondage to sin so that we cannot choose on our own to come to faith or believe in Christ. Faith is a gift God gives apart from the human will.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 2:14 “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

Ephesians 2:1 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”

Romans 8:7 “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.”

13. That God is not the author of sin. Sin was brought into the world through the failing of the first people and now persists because of humanity's corrupted nature.

1 John 3:8 “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

Romans 5:12, 19 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned--For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

14. That while saints are certainly good examples to follow, they should not be prayed to or worshiped.

Ephesians 5:18-20 "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Bible Narratives: Acts 14:8-15

Liturgy: Proper Preface; Hymn 518

15. That the moral law of God should be followed by Christians but it cannot save us. Only the Gospel saves us. The Gospel is the teaching that Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection was accomplished to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. Law and Gospel have separate and distinct aims in the Christian life. The law tells us what to do and exposes our inability to do it. The Gospel delivers us from the impossibility of our perfection under the law and gives us Christ to forgive our law breaking. The Gospel saves. The law condemns.

John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"

John 3:16-18 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Galatians 3:11-13 “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ But the law is not of faith, rather ‘The one who does them shall live by them.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’”

Romans 3:20 “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”

Romans 7:7 “What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Bible Narratives: Luke 10:25-37

*The full text of the Lutheran Confessions can be found at:
<http://www.bookofconcord.org/>*

In addition to the doctrines set forth above from our historic confessions, our congregation also believes:

1. That the historic liturgy of the Church is useful and should be retained. In the Divine Service it is God Himself who is present with us to bless us with his gifts of Word and Sacrament. He is the primary actor. He serves us (**Matt. 20:28**) and we respond to His giving with thanksgiving and praise. His giving, however, is the main thing in the Service. Furthermore, we do not follow trendy forms of worship commonly referred to as “contemporary worship.” We believe the liturgy is itself contemporary in that it captures the true needs of people in every age. Because of their teaching value, we retain many of the historic ceremonies of the Lutheran Church such as bowing, kneeling, making the sign of the holy cross, vestments, chanting parts of the service, etc. Since these are neither commanded nor forbidden in Holy Scripture, we are free to observe these customs.

2. That closed communion is an expression of love for souls. Many churches offer communion to anyone regardless of personal confession or church affiliation. Our congregation follows the historic practice of closed communion, which means we offer the Lord's Supper only to those who are members in good standing of a Missouri Synod Lutheran congregation or one of the churches in official altar and pulpit fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In as much as God's Word warns that those who commune in an unworthy manner eat and drink judgment on themselves (**1 Cor. 11:27**), love compels us to withhold communion from those whose confession of faith does not agree with that of our altar, or those who are living in unrepentant sin, being unforgiving of others, or who are not yet properly instructed. The Lord's Supper is meant to be the highest expression of our oneness in faith and love for Christ.

3. That marriage is designed and ordained by God to be between a man and a woman. Same-sex marriage is rejected as unscriptural and contrary to nature.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Genesis 2:21-24 "So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

4. That homosexuality is inherently sinful and contrary to the will of God.

Romans 1:26-27 "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one

another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

5. That the unborn possess life and dignity as human beings and that abortion is contrary to God's will and breaks the 5th commandment which tells us not to murder.

Psalm 139:13-16 “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Bible Narratives: Luke 1:39-45

6. That God ordained the pastoral office to be occupied by men, and that female pastors are contrary to the will of God.

1 Timothy 2:11-14 “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”

1 Timothy 3:2 “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.”

7. That God created the world in six actual days by means of his Word and that evolution is inherently atheistic and godless.

Exodus 20:11 “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Psalm 33:6, 9 “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”

Hebrews 11:3 “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

Bible Narratives: Genesis 1:1-31

8. That the whole Bible is the true and reliable Word of God. The belief that the Bible merely *contains* the Word of God is rejected.

2 Peter 1:21 “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 2:13 “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”

*Adapted from the website of St. John's Lutheran Church, Hubbard, IA.
Original author: Rev. Dr. Matthew Rueger*