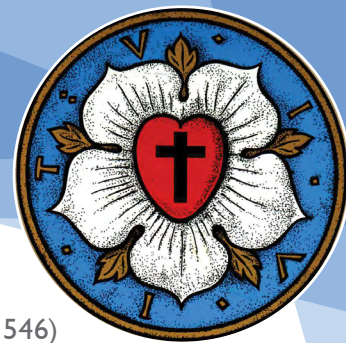


# Why we are Lutherans



Lutherans believe that the Church of Christ is bigger than any single denomination.

The Lutheran Church is strongly influenced by the insights that Martin Luther (1483–1546) gained from the Bible. These insights can help Christians to become joyful, free and responsible sons and daughters of God.

## **Who is God?**

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Lutherans believe in one God, who has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can only understand God through Jesus Christ, God's Son. He reveals God as our loving Creator and Parent. Through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross God shows that he is willing to sacrifice everything for us. Through the resurrection of Christ from the dead God demonstrates the ultimate victory of life over death. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus promise us that whatever happens, God is for us and with us and not against us. As Christians we believe that in everything we experience we can turn to God and can face the future with confidence and joy. God is with us in the good times, as well as in times of suffering and despair.

Through his Holy Spirit, God opens our minds to understand, opens our hearts to believe, and gives us the power to live as Christians.

## **What does it mean to live as a Christian?**

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The commandments of God show us that we are not perfect or without fault. But because God has accepted us in Christ, he transforms us and empowers us to be his co-workers in this world. Our identity lies in Christ and not in our own actions, good deeds and achievements. As mature sons and daughters of God we participate in God's vision for this world. In everything we do, we strive to follow the "Great Commandment", to love God and our neighbour as ourselves (Matt.22,37-39).

## **What about the Bible?**

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Just as we understand God through Jesus Christ, we read and understand the Bible through Jesus Christ. The gospel message of salvation by grace alone is the lens through which we view the entire body of Scripture. This means that Bible passages are interpreted in terms of whether and how they promote the good news of Christ's love. Dealing with the Bible responsibly means that we ensure that our interpretation promotes the cause of Christ.

## **Baptism and Holy Communion (The Sacraments)**

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The Sacraments are God's saving word in a very special, visible form.

In Baptism the death and resurrection of Christ become my reality. I become his, beyond any shadow of doubt. From now on I live as his follower. Once and for all I am incorporated in the fellowship of his believers. Since we believe that God's grace is granted without our prior accomplishments we as a rule practise infant baptism. Our faith is the response to God's unconditional offer, through which we commit ourselves to God, not only once, but again and again, and trust in him throughout our lives.

Through Holy Communion the risen Christ is present in bread and wine and continues to strengthen the faith of his people and knit them together in His body.

## **And the Church?**

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The Church is the community of believers where the word of God is proclaimed and the sacraments are celebrated.

We as believers live through the power of the Holy Spirit who gives each Christian special abilities and talents. We use these gifts to spread the good news in word and deed, build the community of believers and serve Christ in this world.

Lutherans believe that no Christian is more (or less) important than the other. We all share the awesome task and privilege of being God's messengers in the world (the so-called "Ministry of all believers"; cf. 1 Peter 2:9).

As Lutherans we gladly join all Christians in proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord.