

## What is a Lutheran?

Martin Luther was the leader of the Protestant Reformation. He was an ordained priest who was shocked by the spiritual laxity in the high leaders of the Catholic Church in Rome. He disagreed with the Catholic Church's sale of indulgences (payment for a reduction of time in purgatory). He challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church on the nature of penance, the authority of the pope, and the usefulness of indulgences. He listed his disputes by writing his 95 Theses and posting it on the Catholic Church door. This sparked a theological debate which resulted in the Reformation and the birth of the Lutheran.

With the universal Christian Church, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) teaches and responds to the love of the Triune God: the Father, creator of all that exists; Jesus Christ, the Son, who became human to suffer and die for the sins of all human beings and to rise to life again in the ultimate victory over death and Satan; and the Holy Spirit, who creates faith through God's Word and Sacraments. The three persons of the Trinity are coequal and coeternal, one God.

Lutherans believe in the doctrine and authority of Scripture. The LCMS believes that the Bible is without error in all that it says.

We believe, as Martin Luther put it in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed, "that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person . . . not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. . . ." (Luther's Small Catechism with Explanations, p.14).

In grateful response to God's grace, and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world.

Being "Lutheran," our congregations accept and teach Bible-based teachings of Martin Luther that inspired the reformation of the Christian Church in the 16th century. The teaching of Luther and the reformers can be summarized in three short phrases:

Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.