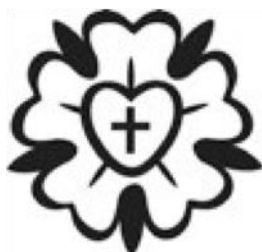


This Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



- + This church confesses the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
This "Trinity" is a holy mystery: a paradox and wonder.
- + This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
The earliest Christian Creed was three words: "*Jesus is Lord.*" This is important for Lutherans; no one or no thing is more important than Jesus Christ. He is the focal point of the Scriptures, the center of our theology and the "head" of the church. Through him we have the gift of faith and salvation.
- + This church believes in the Word of God. This Word is:
 - > Jesus Christ - the Word incarnate.
 - > This Word is also the proclamation of God's message to us as Law and Gospel centering in Christ.
 - > This Word comes to us in the canonical Scriptures inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, which we call the written Word of God. Their purpose is to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- + This church accepts the historic creeds (Nicene, Apostles, Athanasian) as true declarations of the faith, and the Lutheran Confessions as faithful witness and interpretation of the faith.
The historic creeds formulated by the Church to embrace and confess its belief and understanding of the Christian faith remain foundational to this church. The Lutheran Confessions have served to give witness and interpretation to the faith in the light of time and experience, seeking in particular to maintain the emphasis where it must always be, on the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ and the power of grace to redeem and to make a new creation.

+ This church is sacramental.

We believe God uses the Means of Grace to bring Christ's very life to us. Baptism and Holy Communion are sacramental mysteries of faith that empower us with Christ's life; creating and sustaining faith in us for the work of Christ we are called to do in this world. The Holy Spirit works, beyond our own power, through the Sacraments and brings us into the mysteries of Christ's very life.

Holy Baptism - Romans 6

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Holy Communion - 1 Corinthians 10

"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?"



+ We believe worship of God flows into witness and service that proclaims God's love to the whole world.

We are constantly gathered and sent; gathered to worship around God's Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Having been equipped and nurtured in our worship gathering, we are sent out into the world to shared God's redeeming love. This is mission. This is the "mystery of reconciliation" and this is what St. Paul meant by being "ambassadors for Christ."



"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

- 2 Corinthians 5:17-20



+ This church creates a safe place for all people.

This church is determined to see to it that no one is left out, no one is left behind, that all people are respected children of God. This inclusion principal is found in the life of Jesus as recorded in Scripture. It was Jesus who went out of his way to find the lonely, the forgotten, the ritually unclean, the outcast, the poor and the sick. Jesus always sought the outsider and invited them to new life in him.

+ This church is ecumenical.

We are able to reach out to other denominations in a way unparalleled by others. We are able to grasp the hand of The United Church of Christ and Reformed folks who have no bishops, and at the same time hold in equal full communion relationships with United Methodists and Episcopalians who do have bishops. And, in the midst of that, we have continued dialog with African Methodist Episcopal, Mennonite, Orthodox and Roman Catholic kin in Christ. For the sake of serving others in the world, this church will boldly form relationships with Christians whose faith understandings may be somewhat different from our own. We are ever bold to speak with people of other faiths because we are grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The ELCA "Vision for Ecumenism," adopted in 1991, is the blueprint for our ecumenical endeavors.

+ This church maintains a deep and abiding commitment to ministry with children and youth.

This happens through Confirmation classes, retreats, camping events, and Bible studies all across the ELCA. In Alaska, our youth ministry happens because pastors, deacons, youth workers, parents and other adult leaders have a passion for ministry to and with and by youth.

+ This church is engaged globally.

We have deep respect for the rich gifts of our sisters and brothers throughout the world, and have come to understand mission engagement as "accompaniment" where everyone learns from each other. In the Alaska Synod, Petersburg Lutheran Church partners with the Moringe Sokoine School in Monduli, Tanzania. St Mark Lutheran Church-Anchorage supports an Indonesian orphanage and hosts mission trips to Mexico. The Kuwaa Mission of Liberia is supported by the congregations of Lord of Life-North Pole, Central-Anchorage, St. Mark-Anchorage, Trinity-Palmer, Amazing Grace-Anchorage. In addition, this church sends Young Adults in Global Ministry all over the world to learn and serve. Five former YAGMs and one current YAGM are Alaskans.





+ This church is a public church.

We engage our neighbors and our communities working for justice and peace for all people. That's why, for instance, we have worked diligently on social statements. These documents are not 'canon law,' but rather guides to conversation about how faith impacts our witness in the world. Through advocacy, this church gives voice to our concern for others as we live into Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves. All of the advocacy work of this church aligns with the teachings of this church.

+ This church continues in rich theological discussion.

We value education and work toward providing education for our pastors, deacons and lay leaders. To this end, we have eight seminaries that belong to the whole church. The core of biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, confessions, preaching, and liturgy, along with ethics is maintained in each seminary. We provide opportunities for new and continuing education for our pastors, deacons, and lay leaders.

+ This church seeks interfaith dialog and partnerships.

As a church, we must consider anew our calling and commitments as we live into a world that is both ecumenically diverse and multi-religious. Four key ELCA documents, or declarations, currently serve to guide this critical work: ["A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment" \(1991\)](#), ["A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community" \(1994\)](#), ["A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment" \(2019\)](#), and ["A Declaration to the Muslim Community" \(2022\)](#).

+ This church is interdependent.

We have understood faith and ministry at its best when we share our resources. There is a covenantal nature to what we do. We make promises to be the church together: individual Christians, households, congregations, synods, and the national church. Offerings shared on Sunday morning may be used in part across the globe or with a new start ministry or renewal in our synod or country. Promises made by our pastors and deacons at their installation help to encourage this interdependence and are taken seriously and joyfully.