

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

Here is a brief summary of the 28 articles of the Augsburg Confession written in 1530. Even though it didn't bring peace between the Catholic Church of its time and the followers of Martin Luther, it is still treasured by Lutherans as the clearest and simplest statement of our principles and is accepted by all the Lutheran churches of the world.

1. There is one God who is three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. All people are by nature sinful, and in need of new birth through Baptism.
3. Christ is truly divine and truly human.
4. No one can become righteous in God's sight by his own efforts, but solely through faith.
5. God gives us faith through the Gospel and the Sacraments. (Baptism and the Lord's Supper)
6. True faith brings forth the good deeds God expects of his children.
7. The Church is the assembly of believers in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered.
8. Gospel and Sacraments in the Church are effectual even though received through unworthy ministers.
9. The grace of God is offered in Baptism, and therefore Baptism is necessary for salvation.
10. The Body and Blood of Christ are received, under the bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper.
11. Private confession and absolution of sins are approved, though sins are greater than can be confessed entirely.
12. Sinners may be absolved of sin upon honest repentance.
13. The Sacraments are signs of God's will toward us, to stir up and confirm faith in those who receive them.
14. No one should teach publicly in the church, or administer the Sacraments, unless properly called.
15. Celebration of holy days and feasts is approved, but not held necessary.
16. Christians should support their government, and obey its laws, unless these are contrary to God's own laws.
17. Christ will return at the last day as the judge.
18. Man has freedom of will to work for earthly righteousness, but cannot attain God's righteousness without God's help.
19. Sin is not caused by God, but by failure to obey God.
20. One who has faith may be expected to live rightly, although it is not good works that earn God's approval.
21. The saints may be kept in hallowed memory, but are not to be worshiped.
22. Both bread and wine are to be given to communicants in the Lord's Supper.
23. Priests are to be allowed to marry.
24. Holy Communion is to be celebrated reverently, not as a new sacrifice for sin but for strengthening faith.
25. Confession of sin is a proper means of preparation for receiving Communion.
26. Observance of holidays, fasts, rites, and attire are not essential to Christianity and must not be compulsory.
27. God is not pleased by men and women who flee into monasteries and convents.
28. The Church is not to rule the state, or even to make laws governing consciences in religious practices unless these laws already exist in God's Word.