

**Who does The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod believe Jesus is?**

In a world in which information is readily available and opinions abound, this fundamental question stands above all other inquiries and considerations. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes Jesus is exactly who He said He is. Along with the ancient Church, we confess that Jesus is true God and true man in one person. He is the Son of God who was crucified and raised from the dead for the salvation of all who trust in Him. Christ is not Jesus's last name but identifies Him as the Messiah (Christ is the Greek translation of Messiah), the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises that God saves His people. This fulfillment and salvation happened in history in real time and in a real place (first century AD in Israel) through a flesh-and-blood person named Jesus. The Bible is the true and trustworthy Word of God that records God's love for the world through His Son Jesus. The miracles recorded in the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus are true and accurate. Jesus physically died on a cross and physically rose from the dead in three days. He physically ascended into heaven, and the Church awaits His second coming when He will judge all people. Those who trust in Jesus as their Savior will rise to eternal life in heaven. Those who deny Jesus and live in their sin will be cast out of His presence to hell.

**What is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod stand on the Bible?**

We believe, teach, and confess that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit and that God is therefore the true Author of every word of Scripture. We acknowledge that there is a qualitative difference between the inspired witness of Holy Scripture in all its parts and words and the witness of every other form of human expression, making the Bible a unique book. We believe that all Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ and that its primary purpose is to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We therefore affirm that the Scriptures are rightly used only when they are read from the perspective of justification by faith and the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Since the saving work of Jesus Christ was accomplished through His personal entrance into our history and His genuinely historical life, death and resurrection, we acknowledge that the recognition of the soteriological purpose of Scripture in no sense permits us to call into question or deny the historicity or factuality of matters recorded in the Bible. With Luther, we confess that "God's Word cannot err" (LC, IV, 57). We therefore believe, teach, and confess that since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, they contain no errors or contradictions but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth.

**What is The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's view of Baptism and its purpose?**

Lutherans believe that the Bible teaches that a person is saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Jesus Himself commands Baptism and tells us that Baptism is water used together with the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20). Because of this, we believe that through Baptism God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person's heart (see Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:13). We believe that infants are to be baptized because the Bible says that infants can believe (Matt. 18:6) and that new birth (regeneration) happens in Baptism (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5-6). The infant's faith cannot yet, of course, be verbally expressed or articulated by the child, yet it is real and present all the same (see e.g., Acts 2:38-39; Luke 1:15; 2 Tim. 3:15). The faith of the infant, like the faith of adults, also needs to be fed and nurtured by God's Word (Matt. 28:18-20), or it will die. Depending on the situation, Lutherans baptize people of all ages from infancy to adulthood. The LCMS does not believe that Baptism is ABSOLUTELY necessary for salvation. All true believers in the Old Testament era were saved without baptism. Mark 16:16 implies that it is not the absence of Baptism that condemns a person but the absence of faith. Still, baptism is not a mere "ritual" or "symbol," but a powerful means of grace by which God grants faith and the forgiveness of sins.

**What is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's view of abortion?**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes that abortion is contrary to God's Word and "is not a moral option, except as a tragically unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother" (1979 Res. 3-02A).

**How is divorce viewed in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes divorce is contrary to God's original design and intention for marriage. While divorce can be justified scripturally in certain situations (adultery or desertion), it is always preferable for couples to forgive and work toward healing and strengthening their marriage. Because no two situations are alike, LCMS pastors deal on a case-by-case basis with members (or potential members) who are wrestling with the issue of (past or present) divorce.

**What does The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod teach regarding the sacrament of Communion and who can partake in this sacrament?**

The LCMS believes Scripture teaches the Lord's Supper is a precious gift of God in which Christ gives us His true body and blood (in a miraculous way), together with the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith. Because the Bible teaches that this Sacrament may also be spiritually harmful if misused, and that participation in the Lord's Supper is an act of confession of faith, the LCMS ordinarily communes only those who have been instructed in the teachings of our church and who have confessed their faith in these teachings. The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is that not only are members of other Lutheran churches with whom we are in altar and pulpit fellowship invited to commune with us, but also that in certain extraordinary cases of pastoral care and in emergencies members of churches not in fellowship with us may be given Communion.

**Where does The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod stand on the issue of marriage?**

The Scriptures teach that in the beginning the blessed Trinity instituted marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-6), to be held in honor by all and kept pure (Heb 13:4; 1 Thess 4:2-5). God's Word assures us that each time one man and one woman join themselves together in the union of the marriage commitment and relationship, God himself has joined them as one. It is important to see that marriage is not only a grace-filled institution of the church, but part of the very fabric of God's creation which extends to every time and place on earth and includes every man and woman who are joined together in this "one flesh" commitment and bond. Marriage is created by God and is not simply a social contract or convenience. A couple that lives together as man and wife without being married is sinning. God's Word is clear: "You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ....Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:17-19). Our Lord Jesus Christ once helped a woman living with a man who was not her husband to recognize that what she was doing was wrong (John 4:16-18).

**Where does The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod stand on the issue of same-sex marriage?**

God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32). Homosexual behavior is prohibited in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24, 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 1 Tim. 1:10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Rom. 1:26-27). The LCMS affirms that such behavior is "intrinsically sinful" and that, "on the basis of Scripture, marriage [is] the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:2-24; Matt. 19:5-6)" (2004 Res. 3-05A). It has also urged its members "to give a public witness from Scripture against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual 'marriage'" (2004 Res. 3-05A). At the same time, the Synod firmly believes "the redeeming love of Christ, which rescues humanity from sin, death, and the power of Satan, is offered to all through repentance and faith in Christ, regardless of the nature of their sinfulness" (1992 Res. 3-12A).

**What is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's response to homosexuality?**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes the Bible teaches homosexual behavior is contrary to God's Word and will, and the LCMS seeks to minister to those who are struggling with homosexual inclinations. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in convention, reaffirms the position it stated in 1973, That the Synod recognizes homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful.

**Where does The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod stand on the issue of gender identity?**

The LCMS believes that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

**Where do I find more information about The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?**

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod website ([www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org)) or talk with Pastor Snow or Pastor Barry.