



Northeastern Minnesota Synod  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## 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.  
God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Advocate.

✦ 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 the 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. Sacraments are the antidote to an understanding that faith is simply a matter of believing the right doctrines or that faith, once understood, needs no ongoing nurture. Something beyond our own power is at work in the Sacraments that 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 challenged 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 principle 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 was mending the world together.

✦ 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 Orthodox and Roman Catholic sisters and brothers. 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.

Think of ELCA Youth Gatherings where thousands of youth, young adults and adult leaders focus on faith formation, discipleship and hands on peace and justice work. I'm always moved and transformed by the witness of our youth. Ministry continues on through Confirmation classes, retreats, camping events, and Bible studies all across the ELCA supervised by pastors, youth workers, parents and other adult leaders. In our synod, this includes Middle School Gatherings, Cardia Deo, LYO events and a host of networked resources.

✦ This church is engaged globally.

We have deep respect for the rich gifts of our sisters and brothers in other lands, and have come to understand mission engagement as "accompaniment" where everyone learns from each other. We have 120 Companion Synods throughout the world. Both Russia and Honduras are Companion Synods for us here in the NE MN SYNOD. I'm impressed with our focus on young adults in mission: The latest goal of our church is to raise up 100 YAGMS (Young Adults in Global Ministry) each year who go all over the world to learn and to serve.





✦ This church is a public church.

We decided not to be parochial and “to ourselves.” We decided we would 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 those who are denied faith access to the necessities of life or who are treated unjustly within the human systems of government. Our Lord challenges us in Matthew 25 to be more than “charity lite!”

✦ This church continues in rich theological discussion.

We are a church born out of a University as well as out of a Church. We place high value on education for clergy and lay-rostered 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.

✦ 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, congregations, synods, and churchwide. Offerings shared on Sunday morning may be used in part across the oceans or with an emerging or a new start or renewal somewhere in our synod or country. A new roof for a congregation is made possible from members in another congregation. When the flood of June 2012 hit our synod, we organized relief, support and money to be used by anyone that needed help. Promises made by our rostered leaders at their installation help to encourage this interdependence and are taken seriously and joyfully.

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