

Missional Lutherans

Vision, Statement of Faith, and Distinctives

Missional Lutherans intentionally leaves some leeway in a lot of areas in order to encourage more participation and collaboration within the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, there are some essentials that we must agree on, or else we really aren't working towards the same mission.

Vision

Missional Lutherans are committed to making the mission of God an unavoidable issue for the Christian community by encouraging believers to lead Christ-centered and Gospel-driven lives by being incarnational, indigenous, and intentional in the communities they have been called by God to serve, keeping in mind that all believers are called to be full-time missionaries within their respective vocations.

Statement of Faith

Missional Lutherans is not aligned with any particular denomination or organization, although those who participate and contribute may themselves be aligned with specific denominations and organizations.

We hold to the to the basic principles of Martin Luther's theological teachings, specifically grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone. These comprise the core of Lutheranism:

- We are saved by the **grace of God alone** — not by anything we do;
- Our salvation is through **faith alone** — a confident trust in God, who in Christ promises us forgiveness, life and salvation; and
- The **Bible is the norm** for faith and life — the true standard by which teachings and doctrines are to be judged.

Two creeds summarize our primary set of beliefs concerning the Christian faith:

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge
both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**The word 'catholic' simply means "universal," and this was the intended meaning of the early church.*

When seeking to resolve a theological issue, Christians should first turn to Scripture and prayer, trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide us into truth. The Lutheran Confessions and other historical documents can then be referenced, remembering that everything must ultimately be held up to the lens of Scripture.

To be a **partner in dialog**, you must simply affirm the following:

- I affirm both the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds.
- I confess Jesus Christ as my Savior and promise to follow him as Lord.
- I wish to partner with Missional Lutherans in the missional conversation and pursuit of God's mission as defined in their vision statement.

To be a **fellow missional Lutheran**, in addition to the affirmations listed above for partners in dialog, you must agree with the three basic principles of Martin Luther's teachings (grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone), as well as the following statements:

- The Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired and revealed Word of God and are the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct.
- I accept all of the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
- I accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- We are born spiritually dead and are thus subject to the power of the devil. Apart from Christ, we are spiritually bankrupt and inclined only to evil all the time. Because of sin, we are destined to death and eternal separation from God in a literal hell. We are completely helpless and hopeless, powerless to change without the divine grace extended in the offer of the Gospel, God's good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- This salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. The Bible clearly teaches that our salvation cannot come about by our own works; it is entirely the work of God. The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ through the Word of God and creates faith in our hearts.
- I believe that every disciple of Jesus Christ is called to be a full-time missionary within their respective vocations, not just clergy or "church workers."
- I believe the Church is something we *are*, not a place we go or an activity we attend. However, the reason why we gather is inextricably linked to our identity as a Church. The mere gathering of believers does not constitute church, but when we gather in Christ's name and for His mission we are truly and rightly called the Church.
- I understand that America is a post-Christian culture and that in order to effectively share the Gospel with Americans, we must adopt contextualized ministry approaches, approaching American culture as overseas missionaries

approach foreign cultures. This certainly does not mean that it will always be ineffective to plant a traditional institutional building in which the church can meet, but it does mean that this is not always the most effective or desirable approach.

- I reject the notion that spiritual growth or ministry progress can be quantified. Growth and progress come from God and are qualitative processes. The true metric for success in a given assembly of local believers is whether or not they are making disciples who in turn make other disciples of Jesus Christ.

To be an **author**, in addition to the affirmations listed above for fellow missional Lutherans, you must also affirm the following statements:

- I have nothing against institutional, organic, simple, or house church gatherings. I do not believe that any one of these approaches is the best or even optimal in all contexts and cultures.
- I believe that the Church is an organism, not an organization.
- I believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. I teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.
- I acknowledge the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as helpful interpretations of the faith of the Church and as valuable works from our Lutheran heritage.
- I believe in the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.
- I reject the contemporary misinterpretation and improper application of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession which has been misconstrued to mean that *only* men who have completed an accredited Master of Divinity degree from a seminary sanctioned by a denominational organization and have received a formal institutional "call" may publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments.
- **CLARIFICATION:** The above affirmation has nothing to do with your views on women in ministry, it has to do with the claim that any one organization has the authority to say who can and cannot serve in the Church.