

## Who was Martin Luther?



Martin Luther, (1483-1546) the great Christian Reformer of the 16th century, boldly proclaimed the Bible's most important message: that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and lived among us to defeat our enemies—sin, death and the devil. Luther believed and taught that Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross washed away the sins of the whole world, and that those who place their trust in Him are forgiven. They are declared righteous and are reconciled to God.

On a trip to Rome in 1510 he was shocked by the corruption of the clergy and was later troubled by doubts centering on fear of divine retributive justice. His spiritual crisis was resolved when through Bible study he discovered justification by faith, the doctrine that salvation is granted as a gift through God's grace.

Luther urged reform of the Roman Catholic Church, protesting the sale of indulgences and other abuses, and in 1517 he distributed ninety-five statements which questioned Roman Catholic teaching and called for reform.

What Luther began in 1517 reached its culmination in 1580, when the official statements of Lutheran belief (the Lutheran Confessions) were gathered together in what is known as the Book of Concord. We see in the Reformation movement the hand of God working to preserve the truth of His Word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to genuine, historical Lutheranism.

## What about the Bible?



Why is the Bible so important? Someone may say, "The Bible is important to me because it tells me what to do" and another person might say, "The old stories remind me of my childhood." These answers have a grain of truth, but they miss the real reason why the Bible is so important: It is the sure and certain source for knowing who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us. Jesus said, "The Scriptures testify about me" (John 5:39). The main message of the Bible is the good news of God's work to reconcile the world to Himself through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Throughout Old and New Testaments, the central message of the Scripture is the account of how God was in the world preparing it to receive His Son and then what His Son did when He was here. It also tells how the church received this glorious message of salvation, and how it grew and spread throughout the known world. Luther once compared the Bible to the swaddling clothes the baby Jesus was wrapped in. Thus the Bible is Christ-centered.

The Bible has a very important distinction one needs to keep in mind in order to understand the Bible correctly: the difference between Law and Gospel. The Bible reveals God's perfect holiness and righteousness, and His expectation of perfection. His Law, summarized best in the Ten Commandments, reveals our sinful rebellion and our inability to save ourselves. The Gospel is the joyful news that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us complete forgiveness from our sins through His life, death and resurrection for us. The proper distinction between Law and Gospel is the key to understanding the Bible correctly, and is a key feature of Lutheranism.

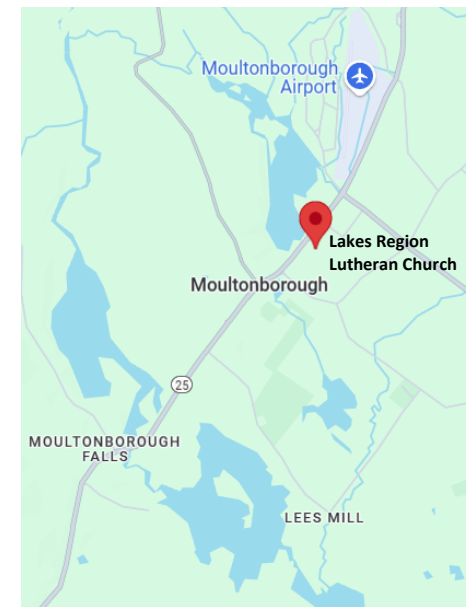
## Lakes Region Lutheran Church



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Sundays, 9:30 AM.

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## ***What is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?***

In the fullness of time, the Son of God descended to earth and became man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. In Jesus, God Himself was with us on earth. Jesus was not only with us, but for us. He came into this sinful and dying world to fight our enemies: sin, death and the devil. He came to set us free. He defeated these enemies by laying down His own life. Through His perfect life and by His death on the cross, Jesus paid the full debt of sin for all people. He rose again and gives us a new life, a life that has meaning, purpose and direction—a life filled with hope and confidence, even during times of sorrow and trouble. Jesus Christ is with us. He loves us and cares for us, giving us the peace that truly passes human understanding.

## ***What is the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?***

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a family of two million Christians, gathered in 6,000 congregations throughout the United States. Our church body was founded in 1847 by a small band of immigrants in America who were dedicated to preaching and teaching the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through Christ alone. Many of the founders of our Synod were from Missouri, hence the word “Missouri” in our church’s name. Our congregations are united in an association of Christian fellowship called a “Synod,”



which means “walking together.” Every congregation is self governed and unique. We believe and teach the same Biblical truths, but our congregations also reflect the diversity of the people we serve. Some are located in rural areas, others in inner cities. Some are large, others are very small. We are a family gathered from all nations, united in the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

The voice of Jesus calls sinners to repentance, and comforts the brokenhearted through the preaching and teaching of His Word from our pulpits and in our classrooms. We operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America. We are a church that honors the Bible as the written Word of God—the very voice of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. God the Holy Spirit, through this Word, creates and sustains trust in Jesus Christ. Through this living and powerful Word, Jesus Himself rebukes, comforts, forgives and guides His people through the perplexing, difficult and confusing questions and decisions we face in our lives. We believe strongly that Jesus is with us and that He still rules His church today through His Word. Therefore, we are committed to reading, studying and growing in the Word of God, the Holy Bible. Our church’s deeply spiritual and reverent liturgical worship is filled with the Word of God, through which Jesus blesses us with His presence and peace.



We treasure the special means by which Jesus Himself dwells among us with His forgiving grace. Therefore, our Synod is very much Christ-centered. Our focus is on Jesus Christ and His presence

among us. We believe that Jesus is present among us through the life-giving waters of Baptism, a Sacrament that unites us with Jesus’ death and resurrection, washes away our sins, and brings us into the body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church. We rejoice in the gracious presence of Jesus in the Sacrament called the Lord’s Supper. It is the true body and blood under bread and wine given to Christians to eat and to drink. In this sacred meal, Jesus feeds us and sustains us with the forgiveness of sins, strengthening us for a life of service to Him in this world, and preparing us for life forever with Him in heaven.

As the people of the Missouri Synod, we rejoice in Christ’s presence, not only in our public worship assemblies, but also in our daily lives.



Whether our place of service is small or great, humble or exalted in the eyes of the world, it is a holy calling in which we serve the Lord Jesus Christ with joyful hearts. Together and individually, we strive to follow the example of Jesus who loved us and cared for us when we had no strength. Through our church’s relief programs, our Synod is present with material and spiritual resources to care for those who suffer from natural disasters and tragedies in the world. We have built and help to maintain a large network of Lutheran hospitals, nursing homes, and human-care agencies to serve the sick, the elderly, the victims of abuse, those struggling with addictions, and many others coping with difficult situations and transitions in life. For more information go to [www.LCMS.org](http://www.LCMS.org).