

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church

Geneseo, IL



150th Anniversary - 1864 to 2014

Heaven comes to us...



Architecture

Windows

Divine Service

316 South Oakwood Avenue, Geneseo, Illinois 61254 Phone 309-944-3993

<http://www.geneseolutheranchurch.com>

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Definitions of words in (bolded and underlined) are found in the Glossary at the end of this document

Worship section adapted from <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1067>

Glossary Adapted from LCMS Liturgical Glossary, <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1067>) and other LCMS sources

Other sources identified in body

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church

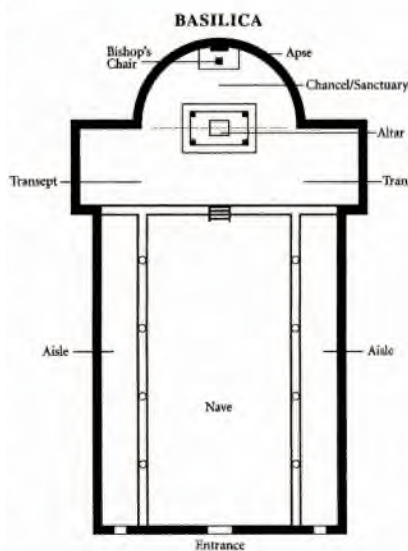
God has been at work for over 150 years in Geneseo through Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church using artisans, workers, and church members to bring His love, care, and glory to Geneseo.

Martin Luther teaches that God comes to us through people in the world. We can do nothing for God, who created the universe out of nothing. For Lutherans, God "hides" in ordinary human beings in order to care for His creation and to serve believers. Heaven comes to us in the architecture and the windows of our church building, and through the reassurance, teaching, and gifts we receive in worship.

Entering into a church is a step out of the chaos and destruction of the world into the comforting structure and re-creation of God's presence and heavenly location. This is a special place; a sacred place. Here is where God has promised to be in His **Means of Grace; Word and Sacrament**.

Architecture

The current church building was constructed in 1958. The floor plan is mid-twentieth century American, yet is reminiscent of a small chapel with Gothic memories, such as one transept (old choir loft), Grand center aisle, Great Cross, **Altar**, open wooden beams and a **Chancel** separate from the **Nave**, in the tradition of a basilica.



The Latin word "basilica" was originally used to describe a Roman public building, usually located in the forum of a Roman town. Gradually the style of the imperial building, known as a basilica (which means "king's hall", and comes from the Greek word "basileus", which means "king"), became the standard structure for Christian churches. Rather quickly Emperor Constantine designated the basilica style as the appropriate style for the gathering place of God's guests because it was associated with dignity, authority, and simplicity. *Timothy H. Maschke, Gathered Guests, A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church, Second Edition, Concordia Publishing House 2009, pp. 228, 229*

At Concordia the grand center aisle in the nave points us to the Altar and the central event of all history, the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our sight is automatically drawn to The Great Cross above the altar which reminds us of the price paid by our Lord Jesus Christ to bring believers to the Father... *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8*



As we progress up the aisle we see above us large wooden beams which, if turned upside down, the nave with its pointed ceiling resembles a ship with seafarers safely within her. Believers are reminded that the church is the ship of salvation in a broken and sinful world.

The Nave represent the world. Separated from the Chancel by the **Triumphal Arch** to teach us that heaven is separate from the world. As we get closer to the Altar we are in an area where heavenly things happen. The base of the arch has three steps to remind us of the **Trinity**, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Lectern from which Scripture lessons are read during worship is at the top step to teach us that God's Word comes from heaven to the world. The Pulpit starts at the top step and is projected into the nave (world) to show us that as the Gospel is rightly proclaimed by the pastor; the saving Word comes to us in the world as if from Jesus Himself. The **Communion Rail** is where heaven comes to us when we participate in Holy Communion.



The Altar is the chief focal point of the church building. Here heaven and earth are united as the body and blood of Jesus are given in, with and under the elements of bread and wine for our forgiveness, and as the prayers of God's people are offered on behalf of the church and the world.



At Concordia the **Baptismal Font** is anchored to the foundation of the church, noting its foundational role in Christianity. The font is eight sided to remind us of the Flood of Noah where eight souls in all were saved of the entire human race after the flood of God's judgement. This flood points us to Holy Baptism. Here God comes as His Triune Name is spoken upon us to mark us as His child. Here is a picture of our gracious God doing all the work for us, His creation, as He comes and washes our sins away, placing His name on us, and claiming us as His dear child.

(1 Peter 3:20b-21)

The architecture of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, and most "historic" churches, has much to teach us about our life of faith in Christ. We treasure the insights and gifts that our forefathers took the time, effort, and money to make the teachings of Christ's Church be preserved and passed down for ages to come. One of these lessons is shown in the scarlet border of the Altar which flows from the Chancel to the Nave and to the doorways, to teach us that the blood of Jesus Christ goes to whole the world to bring forgiveness, life, and salvation to all believers regardless of race, location, or time.

Encircling all the Willet windows is a scarlet ribbon to remind us that all things necessary for our forgiveness, life, and salvation are accomplished by the Blood of Jesus Christ who "has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true." *Small Catechism, explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed, Martin Luther, 1529*

Windows

Our stained glass windows are original to the church and are signed works of art by Henry Willet.

A few years ago our windows needed repair. A window restorer/estimator was taking pictures and measurements. When he saw the window with the signature, Henry Willet, his eyes lit up and mouth dropped open. He described our windows as "finding a Tiffany Lamp in your attic."

Willet Studios was founded in 1898 by William Willet. This studio designed and fabricated all the stained glass windows in the Cadet's Chapel at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Willet windows were created for many of the major churches and cathedrals in the United States including the National Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church Heaven Comes to Us...

Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and Saint Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco. They have completed projects in all 50 states as well as 14 foreign countries. This studio continues today as Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, located in Philadelphia, PA.

Willet Hauser Architectural Glass completed the restoration and protection of our windows in 2010.

THE SYMBOLS

Symbols have always played a prominent part in Christianity. So in a Church building, symbols present pictures by means of which some important scripture truth or event is portrayed. We shall here give a brief explanation of the symbols which are to be found, not only in the Sanctuary window above the altar, but also on the window groupings in the nave.



Centering our attention upon the window in the Sanctuary we see the symbols below the cross arms carry out the theme of the passion, suffering and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind.

Beginning in the lower left and going upward to the cross arms, and then going to the right and down to the lower right, we find the following symbols, briefly explained:

Lighted Lantern: At night the motley mob came to the garden of Gethsemane to take Christ captive. *John 18:3, So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*



Sword and the Staff: Weapons with which this mob was armed. *Matthew 26:47, While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Mark 14:43, John 18:3*



Bag and Thirty Pieces of Silver: The price Judas was paid to betray his Lord into the hands of His enemies. *Matthew 26:15, and (Judas) said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. Mark 14:11, Luke 22:5*



Crowing Cock: Reminder of Peter's three-fold denial of his Lord. *Matthew 26:75, And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. Mark 14:72, John 13:37-38*

Crown of Thorns and Three Nails: The crown used by soldiers to torment Christ as they beat Him, and nails that pierced His hands and feet. *Matthew 27:29, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Mark 15:17, John 19:5*



Ewer and the Basin: Pilate's feeble attempt to rid himself of guilt and Jesus by washing his hands and claiming innocence. *Matthew 27:24, So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."*



Sponge, Reed and Ladder: At the Savior's cry, "I thirst," a soldier dipped a sponge in vinegar, put it upon a reed and raised it to the Savior's lips. *Psalm 22:15, my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. Matthew 27:34, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. Mark 15:36 Luke 23:36, John 19:29*



The Empty Cross: "It is finished," Christ's work of the redemption of sinful man was completed. He fully paid the price to redeem His creation. *Matthew 27:50, And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*



Mark 15:43-46, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Luke 23:46, Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. John 19:30



Above the cross arms, on the left is the Hand, a symbol for God the Father who created everything and still preserves it by His blessing. *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Psalm 104*

us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Luke 2:30-32, for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

To the right, the Lamb with the Scepter is a symbol for Jesus Christ, the Victorious Redeemer, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The banner held by the Lamb of God depicts Jesus Christ as the Savior of the nations. *John 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among*



Above, in the two triangles are the letters A and O, the Alpha and Omega; the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These refer us to the Savior's designation of Himself "as the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." *Revelation 1:17, When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last," Revelation 2:8, And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: "The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life." Revelation 21:6, And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."*



In the nave are five groups of windows, with four windows to each group, along with two windows in the choir transept. Each of these is also adorned with symbols. Beginning with the group of windows along the north wall of the nave. Beginning at the chancel end the festivals of the Church year are portrayed by symbols.

The following are the seasons of the Church year, festival days and their symbols:



Advent: Isaiah 7:14, foretelling the virgin birth and the symbol of the Lamb of God with scepter, pointing to the coming Christ. *Isaiah 7:14, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Christmas: Star and manger with the **Chi Rho**, symbolic of the Savior. *Matthew 2:2 "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*



Epiphany: Gifts which the Wise Men brought to Jesus. *Matthew 2:11, And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*



Lent: Crossed scourges, a symbol of penitence. Showing that Jesus Christ was wounded for our transgressions, and His punishment brought us peace. *Isaiah 53:3-5, He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*



Maundy Thursday: Cup and Host or Wafer, reminding us of the institution of the Lord's Supper the night of the betrayal. *Matthew 26:26-29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

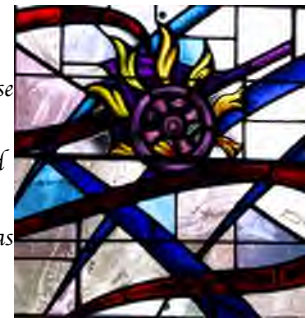
Good Friday: Cross and Crown of Thorns and Three Nails. *Matthew 27:32-44* As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.



Easter: The Empty Tomb and the Shroud, and the Pomegranate, which when ripe bursts open, symbolic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and new life. *Matthew 28:1-10*, Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

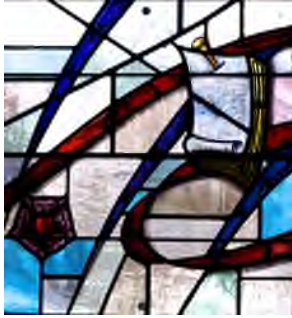


Ascension: Fiery Chariot Wheel is a reference to Elijah's ascension into heaven, pointing to Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven. *Acts 1:9-11*, And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." 2 *Kings 2:11*, And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

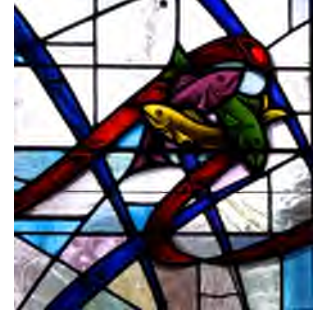


Pentecost: Dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit and the Tongue of Flame. *Acts 2:1-4* When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Trinity: Three Intertwined Fishes, symbolic of the Triune God, the Three-in-One, one of many symbols for the Trinity.



Reformation: Luther's coat of arms, and the 95 Theses nailed to the door of the castle Church at Wittenberg.



All Souls': Hand of God with a cloud above it, a reference to the great cloud of witnesses in heaven, those redeemed by the crucified. *Revelation 7:9, After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...*



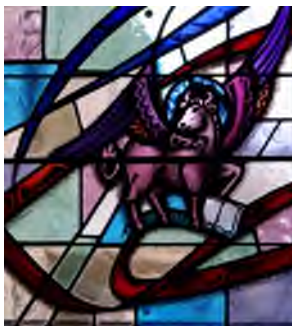
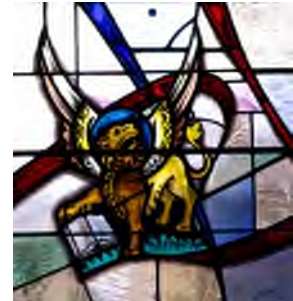
On the south side of the Nave are two groups of windows.



The first group, going from the **Narthex** toward the Chancel, contains the symbols for the four Gospel writer Evangelists:

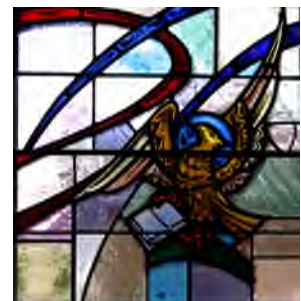
MATTHEW: Winged man, stressing the humanity of Jesus.

MARK: Winged lion, the Savior as the Royal Lion of Judah.



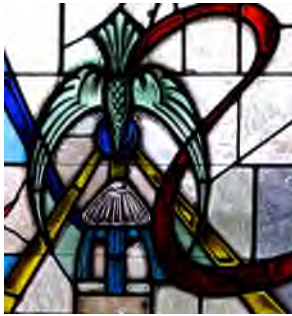
LUKE: Winged calf, reminder of the sacrifice that the Savior made for the sins of the world.

JOHN: Winged eagle, as the eagle is the highest flying of all birds, so John gives evidence of a greater understanding of the person and work of Christ.



The second group of four symbolizes some of the important acts of the Church:

The Sacrament of **HOLY BAPTISM:** Bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the shell from which three streams of water flow, signifying Holy Baptism in the name of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, at Christ's institution. *Matthew 28:18b-19, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Mark 16:16a, Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, 1Peter 3:20-21*



The Sacrament of **THE LORD'S SUPPER:** Symbolized by the Cup of wine and the bread as Host, or Wafer. The bodily presence of Jesus Christ among us in body and blood, bread and wine at Christ's institution.

Matthew 26:26-28, Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Luke 22:19-20, And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." 1Corinthians 11:23-25, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



CONFIRMATION: Blessing of the Holy Spirit, signified by the Dove, invoked upon the one making confession of faith in Jesus Christ, symbolized by the CHI RHO.

HOLY MATRIMONY: Intertwined rings, the vessels of flame, and the cross in the background. Unity and oneness of the flesh of one man and one woman. The picture of how Jesus Christ and the church of believers are bound together.

Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:7, then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. Genesis 2:18-24, Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Matthew 19:4-6, He answered, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Ephesians 5:1-2, Ephesians 5:22-33



In the choir transept:

LYRE or HARP: Symbol for praise. Psalm 101:1, I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will make music. Isaiah 38:20, The Lord will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives, at the house of the Lord.



INCENSE BURNER: Rising smoke, a symbol of prayer. Psalm 141:1-4, O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you! Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!



Other stained glass windows:

Both of the following windows were taken from the church building which stood on the site to the immediate north of the present church from 1878 to 1958.

Gethsemane window: Located at the east end of the Nave, over the organ pipes. This portrays our Savior's agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane immediately prior to His betrayal to the mob by Judas. Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-48





Entrance door window: This window was over the main entrance doors to the 1878 church. "Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, U.A.C. Built 1878." EV is the abbreviation for "Evangelical" and means we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our members, the community and the world. U.A.C. is the abbreviation for "Unaltered Augsburg Confession." This indicates our acceptance of the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church adheres to the original Augsburg Confession as a true exposition of Holy Scripture and that any alteration after 1530 is incorrect or imprecise and is to be rejected. Our Concordia forefathers gave us this bold declaration of our steadfast confession of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

Divine Service

The Main Purpose of Lutheran Worship Is to Receive God's Gifts - If you were to ask most people what worship is, they might say, "Worship is praising the Lord" or "Worship is what human beings do to express their thanks to God" or "Worship is going to church," or something like that. While there is some truth to each of these answers, they do not adequately describe the main purpose of Lutheran worship.

We Lutherans have a unique perspective on worship as derived from God's own word. We know that God's Word and His Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are His precious gifts to us. They are the tools the Holy Spirit uses to give us what all sinners most desperately need, that is forgiveness, life, and salvation. The main purpose of Lutheran worship is to receive these gifts from God.

Our Lutheran Confessions explain this truth as follows: "The service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God." (*Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article IV.310*). Dr. A.L. Barry, *President Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Lutheran Worship: 2000 and Beyond "Seven Theses on Lutheran Worship" February 1998*

Worship is like no place in this world.

But there is one place that it does resemble, and that is Heaven.

The story is told of how Christianity was introduced to Russia. More than 1,000 years ago Grand Duke Vladimir of Kiev was interested in selecting an appropriate religion for his new nation. His emissaries investigated the main religions of the day, including Judaism, Islam, western Christian and eastern Orthodox. But it was only after visiting the chief site of the Orthodox Church in Constantinople that they found what they were looking for. In their report to their duke, the emissaries noted that in Orthodox worship there was such solemn splendor that they had a hard time knowing whether they were in heaven or on earth.

Worship is like that: one foot in heaven with the other here on earth. What brings heaven into our earthly worship is not dependent on the elaborateness of the service or the sincerity of our devotion. Rather, it is because of the One who is present in our worship that we experience heaven on earth. If worship is "heaven on earth," then it stands to reason that what we do and say in worship should in some sense give us a foretaste of that **Great Feast** to come (*Revelation 5:12-13, 19:5-9*).

In the following tour of the **Divine Service** we will see how the ancient texts of the liturgy give us that glimpse of heaven and, more importantly, how they deliver to us, here and now, the eternal benefits of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

This Divine Service sounds and looks different than the world outside the Church. The ancient liturgy forms God's active work in worship, and our responses to Him. Portions of this liturgy were established in first century Christian worship, while other parts extend back 4,000 years. The Divine Service and the worship of the Triune God are not entertainment for the congregation, but rather, God Himself bringing and giving comfort and salvation to His people.

Parts of the Divine Service:

Invocation: The invocation of the name of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit reminds us of our baptism, where the God of creation does all of the work, coming to us to wash us clean of our sins and place His name on us, and claim us as His dear child. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Already now, in this heaven on earth we call worship, we stand with boldness before the Triune God who has claimed us and named us.



Confession and Absolution: Confession and Absolution keep us honest among ourselves and honest before God. The act of confession is not some work that we lay before the Father's throne; rather, it is simple acknowledgment that God's word is true and right and that when we measure ourselves against His Law's demands, we come up short (to sin is literally to miss the mark). For example, God's Word says "you shall not give false testimony," but in truth we have lied and gossiped and slandered. And so, the Christian confesses: "Lord, Your Word is true; I have sinned."

We need to give sin and guilt their proper due, and then silence them. That is the way of God's absolution. With His forgiveness, our sin is removed from us as far as the east is from the west. Christians know that, but they also need to be reminded that those familiar words, "I forgive you all your sins," are not just some impersonal announcement by the pastor. The pastor, acting "in the stead and by the command of Jesus Christ" speaks these words. The words say what they mean and accomplish what they accomplish: the forgiveness of sin.

Kyrie: In this world of sin and death, Christians have plenty of opportunities to join the brief, yet all-encompassing prayer of the Kyrie: "Lord, have mercy." All around us we see the results of hatred, envy, lust and greed. Surely, the world is in need of God's mercy. It's no wonder that the Church, in her worship (this is the first reference to the church as the Bride of Christ), pleads before God on behalf of the whole world. It is a prayer that no one else is going to pray.

Gloria in Excelsis: On the night of Jesus' birth, the angels let loose their heaven opening and earth-shattering song of praise: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (*Luke 2:14*) On that specific occasion, their praise gave utterance to the Good News that the Son of God had come in the flesh. Heaven had come down to earth! And ever since, the Church has continued to rejoice in this miracle of our salvation; God's answer to our prayers for His mercy.

The opening words of the Gloria in Excelsis are followed by a hymn of praise to the triune God. One can imagine the faithful singing these words in heaven: "We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give You thanks for Your great glory." Our focus is on the incarnate Son of God, the only-begotten Son, the Lamb of God, and only Son of the Father. And if that isn't enough to name this One who is the object of our worship and praise, twice we sing, "You take away the sin of the world." There it is, the heart and substance of the Christian faith. In heaven we will be gathered around the throne and the Lamb, confessing that He alone is holy, He alone is the Lord. He alone is our salvation from sin and death.

Word of God and Sermon: Frequently we conclude the readings of the Holy Scriptures with the phrase, "This is the Word of the Lord!" More than just a "word" from God, this is His revelation in which He makes known to us His will, most specifically, His merciful will that desires our eternal salvation. Ultimately, this word points us to the Word, the incarnate Son of God. He is God's final and full revelation to us, the mirror of the Father's heart. That is the point that the writer to the Hebrews makes in the opening verses of his epistle: "*In many and various ways God spoke to His people of old by the prophets, but now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son*" *Hebrews 1:1-2a*. Only through Him, God's only Son, are we able to know the Father's favor and grace.

In the sermon, the Word of God is brought to bear on the lives of the hearers. This is the equivalent of sitting at the feet of Jesus. But it's more than mere instruction. Through the sermon, God speaks to us with His two-edged sword of condemnation and promise, Law and Gospel. The subject of the sermon is both God and us. Through the sermon we come to a better understanding of ourselves, especially our need for God's
Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church Heaven Comes to Us...

forgiveness. But we also come face to face with God's mercy and love. Week after week, God's faithful hear the voice of their Good Shepherd, preparing them for that final day when Jesus will call them to their eternal reward.

Creed: In the course of His earthly ministry, Jesus put this hard question to His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" He wasn't asking for the opinions of the crowds. He wanted a confession of faith. In reality, this confession is no different than the confession of sins. In both, we acknowledge that what God has said is true. When we confess our sins, we acknowledge the truth that God speaks about us, that we are sinners. When we confess the faith of the Church in the creed, our confession speaks about God, who He is and what He has done, that we may know it, and confess our faith in Jesus Christ to others.

We use the historic **Apostles'**, **Nicene**, or **Athanasian** creeds regularly in worship.

Offertory: "What shall I render to the Lord?" The truth is, we have nothing to render to Him. We brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing with us when we depart. As Jesus so poignantly tells us, our treasures are already stored up for us in heaven (*Matthew 6:19-21*).

There is, however, an offering that we do make, both now in our worship and one day in heaven itself. It is the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" as we "call on the name of the Lord" (*Psalms 116:17*). In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession (Article 24), this **eucharistic** sacrifice is carefully distinguished from the **propitiatory** sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice for sins belongs to Christ alone. Every time we try to grab that honor for ourselves, we come up short, very short. But when we recognize our rightful place, that we are on the receiving end of God's merciful goodness, then the sacrifice of thanksgiving cannot help but pour forth from our lips as we give thanks to the One who gave everything for us.

The giving of our firstfruits, whether it is money or possessions, time or talents, is also a part of this sacrifice of thanksgiving. Our mouths cannot remain separated from the rest of our bodies. If the thanksgiving is flowing from our lips, then it will also find expression in the giving of our very selves for the sake of Christ and the neighbor.

Proper Preface: This prayer is to prepare us for the Service of the Sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, Holy Communion. This is a prayer connecting the season of the church year to our present time and concludes with the words, "Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven"... This prepares us to go to the Communion Rail knowing that this is where heaven and earth intersect. We are joined together here by God with all the heavenly host, including believers who have gone before us to heaven.

Sanctus: If any part of the service has been recognized as providing a glimpse of heaven, it's the Sanctus: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Your glory." This is the eternal song of the angels who hover over the throne of God in the vision of heaven that was given to Isaiah (*Isaiah 6:1-4*). Such was the splendor of their song that the very foundations of the threshold of the temple trembled at the sound.

At first glance, these words appear to be out of place at this point in the service. Nevertheless, the reality is that there is nothing in this entire world that compares with the miracle of Jesus' bodily presence to feed His people. In this meal God is breaking into our world to give us life. No wonder our repeated cry is "Hosanna in the highest," for what is more needed in this dying world than the Lord's salvation?

The second half of the Sanctus contains a statement as bold as the first. Here we have our own little Palm Sunday. Just as the crowds cried out to Jesus as He entered Jerusalem, so do we declare, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (*Matthew 21:9; Psalm 118:26*). Heaven continues to break into our world as Jesus, our humble king, comes riding into our midst in the Lord's name. This is a confession in the Sanctus of Jesus Christ's Real Presence with us.

Words of Institution: Among many Christians, the words of Jesus that we often refer to as the Words of Institution are nothing more than a historical report: this is what Jesus did and what He said. Period. We have been blessed to know, however, that these words mean much more. They do what they say. According to the command of Christ, we celebrate the Lord's Supper not as a mere meal of remembrance, but as a Sacrament by which Jesus Himself comes to us. We don't transport ourselves back in time; rather, He comes to us in our present, and brings heaven down to earth for our benefit.

Of course, in heaven we won't receive the Lord's Supper. There we will have Jesus, the Bread of heaven, in all His fullness. But for now, as we wait for His return, He establishes His own beachhead in our sin-infested world, coming as our defender and deliverer, offering His own body and blood as the medicine of immortality. We believe Jesus Christ comes to us in Body and Blood, in, with, and under the Bread and Wine for forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Agnus Dei: When we sing the Agnus Dei, "Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us," we are preaching and praying all at once. It was, after all, with these very words that John the Baptizer pointed his disciples to Jesus (*John 1:29, 36*). As we prepare to feast on the Lamb of our salvation, we do indeed proclaim him who gave His life for us. Here is Jesus Christ the Lamb of God! Yet we also pray to Him who is now present in His body and blood. We pray for mercy; mercy from the One who showed the true depths of mercy and compassion as He was silently led to slaughter, dying like a lamb shorn of all its honor.

Distribution: Try for a moment to picture the heavenly throng standing before the throne of God on the Last Day. The numbers will be staggering. And yet, on this side of heaven, united as we all are to Christ, the Bridegroom, we will be one, the Church on earth now the Church Triumphant in paradise, His elect Bride. As the faithful make their way to the altar to feast on the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the distribution, they are given a glimpse of that Holy Bride. Oh yes, we see all of her warts and blemishes, the petty bickering over trivial matters, the deep disagreements on more weighty issues, and the painful ways in which we sometimes treat one another. Yet, by our common confession of the truth, we are one in Christ. He is truly present among us in this meal. Ordinary bread and wine are, according to His own words, His Body and Blood "given and shed for the forgiveness of sins." We receive nourishment for both our earthly body and our spiritual soul in this meal. As Christ gives Himself to us in this holy meal, He strengthens that unity and bids us love one another with a deep and abiding love as He has loved us and gave Himself for us all! It can be no other way then, as we are sent from the table with the blessing to depart in peace with God and one another in the gift of Jesus Christ, and forgiveness, life, and salvation!

Nunc Dimittis: A Lutheran contribution to the church's liturgy is the use of the Nunc Dimittis as the post-communion canticle: "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace." At first glance it appears that we're taking the words of Simeon completely out of context. After all, what does his experience have to do with ours? How can Holy Communion ever compare to Simeon's unique honor of holding the infant Jesus in his arms during the child's first visit to the temple at the tender age of 40 days (*Luke 2:25-38*)?

Following our reception of the Lord's Supper, we sing Simeon's ancient song of faith--"Lord, now let your servant depart in peace." Nothing could be more appropriate. Indeed, our eyes have seen His salvation. Better yet, we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (*Psalms 34:8*)! So, what could be better than holding the infant Jesus in our arms? How about eating and drinking His body and blood given for the forgiveness of our sins? This truly is heaven on earth, because here we have Jesus and all His benefits.

Aaronic Benediction: The ancient and Trinitarian benediction given to Aaron in the wilderness after the Exodus (*Numbers 6:24-26*) again reminds us that we are God's own children, receiving His gifts for our lives.

"The Lord bless you and keep you." (God the Father's work) "The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you." (God the Son's work) "The Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace." (the God the Holy Spirit's work)

We Christians are truly blessed in that God does not hide His face from us. In all other religions there is ultimately doubt as to their gods' attitudes toward them. How can it be

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church

Heaven Comes to Us...



otherwise, given that their gods are the creation of their own imaginations? But ours, the God of the Holy Scripture both Old Testament and New Testament, is the creator of heaven and earth. To be sure, He is a stern judge who holds the sinner accountable. But in the person of His only Son, we see our Father's true nature, His fatherly heart of love. This is the expression of love toward us in His Holy Word and Holy Sacraments as He reveals His mercy and grace.



Where the Lord blesses and makes His face shine and lifts up His gracious countenance on us, there is peace. Not the peace of this world, but peace between God and His faithful people. We know that peace because even now, in Word and Sacraments, we have Jesus and all His benefits. And in heaven we will see with our own eyes (*Job 19:26-27*) what our eyes of faith have beheld since our Baptism and grown in Jesus Christ through teaching and learning Word and Sacraments, we will rest in His eternal peace.

Finally, "we believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is present offering the gifts of life, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins as we hear His word and receive His holy meal. In the Divine Service we are confident that we have entered heaven itself because Jesus Christ inhabits our worship with His bodily presence." ... "*Heaven on Earth*" Arthur A. Just, Jr., *Concordia Publishing House*, 2008, pg. 277

Glossary:

Aaronic Benediction: The familiar blessing that begins, "The Lord bless you and keep you." It is given the name "Aaronic" because it is the blessing God commanded Moses to give to his brother Aaron to speak to the people (*Numbers 6:24-26*).

Absolution: Following the confession of sins, the Absolution pronounces God's forgiveness either in a direct form ("I absolve/forgive you") or in a declarative form ("God forgives you all yours sins"). The word comes from the Latin, "absolvere", which means "to loosen, set free, or absolve" (*John 20:23*).

Agnus Dei (AH-nyoos DAY-ee): Latin for "Lamb of God," this hymn in the communion liturgy draws on the words of John the Baptist who pointed his disciples to Jesus, the Lamb of God (*John 1:29*). In the context of the communion liturgy, we are praying to Christ who is there present in His body and blood to have mercy on us and grant us peace.

Alleluia: Hebrew for "praise the Lord" (though in its Greek spelling). It is a word of joy and gladness. An ancient custom is to refrain from using Alleluia during Lent in order to distinguish the penitential nature of this season from the exuberance of the Easter season that follows.

Altar: Together with the font and pulpit, the altar is the chief focal point of the church building. Here heaven and earth are united as the body and blood of Jesus are given under the elements of bread and wine for our forgiveness, and the prayers of God's people are offered on behalf of the church and the world.

Amen: Of Hebrew origin, "Amen" means that what has preceded is "true and certain." Thus, as the congregation's response to prayers, the Amen is an affirmation that the prayer just prayed is the prayer of the entire assembly, spoken on their behalf. In the Small Catechism, Luther explained Amen with: "Yes, yes, it shall be so."

Antiphon (AN-tih-fonn): A refrain-like verse from Scripture that begins and concludes a psalm or canticle. Sometimes it is also interspersed within a psalm.

Apostles' Creed: Though not written by the apostles (a common assumption in the Middle Ages) the Apostles' Creed faithfully summarizes the apostolic teaching of Holy Scripture. Its origins date back to the
Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church Heaven Comes to Us...

second century where it developed as a statement of faith in conjunction with Holy Baptism. In most churches it is still used at every baptism.

Athanasian Creed: One of the three ecumenical (universally accepted) creeds, it probably originated around A.D. 500. Though it bears the name of Athanasius (fourth century), it was certainly not written by him. This creed is a grand expression of the Trinitarian faith.

Baptismal Font: The location in the church where infant and adult baptisms are performed. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded baptism in *Matthew 28:19* *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Chancel: The section of a church building beyond the nave where the altar and pulpit (and often the font) are located.

Chi Rho: from first two letters in Greek for Christ - the monogram for Christ

Collect (KOLL-ekt): A concisely written prayer that "collects" the prayers of the people. The Collect of the Day is prayed toward the beginning of the Divine Service, prior to the reading of Holy Scripture. The collect usually follows a pattern of: address to God, basis for the prayer, petition, desired benefit or result, and Trinitarian termination.

Confession: Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution... Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer, but before the pastor (private confession) we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts. *Small Catechism, Confession, Martin Luther, 1529*

Divine Service: The name commonly given to the regular weekly service that includes the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Derived from the German Gottesdienst ("God's service"), its meaning is dual in nature. In worship, God serves us with his gifts of forgiveness and life, and we respond in service to Him through our sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise.

Doxology: From the Greek for "words of praise." It is an expression of praise to God, usually in a trinitarian formulation. The Gloria Patri ("Glory be to the Father and to the Son..."), is a common doxology used to conclude psalms and many canticles. Many hymns have a concluding, doxological stanza that praises the Holy Trinity. The most familiar of these stanzas is known as the Common Doxology ("Praise God from whom all blessings flow...")

Eucharist (YOU-kahr-ist): One of the many terms for the Lord's Supper. It comes from the Greek word meaning "thanksgiving." Even as Jesus gave thanks when He instituted the Lord's Supper, so do we give thanks that in this holy meal our Lord gives us His body and blood for forgiveness and life.

Eucharistic: pertaining to or derived from the Eucharist.

Gloria in excelsis (GLOR-ee-ah in ex-SHELL-sis): Also known as the "greater doxology," this is a hymn of praise sung at the beginning of the Divine Service. It originates from the fourth century and has been in regular use for over a millennium. The canticle begins with the angel's song in *Luke 2:14* and then continues with a hymn of praise to the triune God, focusing chiefly on the saving work of Jesus, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." It is omitted during Advent, in anticipation of the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas, and during the Lenten season of penitence.

Gloria Patri (GLOR-ee-ah PAH-tree): Latin for "glory to the Father." The complete text is: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen."

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church

Heaven Comes to Us...

Also known as the "lesser doxology," this ascription of praise is appended to psalms and other liturgical texts.

Gradual: A selection of psalm verses traditionally sung between the Epistle and Gospel. With the regular use of the Old Testament reading, the Gradual now appears after that reading, before the Epistle. The word Gradual is from the Latin "gradus" for "step," which refers to the step of the lectern from which the Gradual was traditionally sung.

Great Feast: Feast described in *Revelation 19:6-9* *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."*

Holy Gospel: Refers to the reading of one of the evangels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) in the Divine Service. The reading of the words of Jesus is given the highest place of prominence by being read last. At services when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, the congregation stands for the reading. Especially on high festivals like Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc., the Gospel may be read from the center of the nave, symbolizing what it means that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (*John 1:14*). The movement to and from this location is referred to as the Gospel Procession.

Hosanna: From Hebrew, its basic meaning is "to save." It functions as a plea to God our king to have mercy on us and save us from our lost condition.

Incense: From the Latin word "to set on fire." In Jewish worship in the temple, incense symbolized prayer rising before God (*Psalms 141:2*). The same image is used of the prayers of the saints in heaven (*Rev. 8:3-5*). In use in the Christian Church for over 1,500 years, the sweet smelling aroma engages another of the senses. Its association with prayer recommends it for use at any service, but especially the prayer offices (see Daily Office).

Introit (in-TRO-it): From the Latin, meaning "to enter." Traditionally this was the entrance hymn to the Divine Service, consisting of antiphon, psalm, Gloria Patri, and antiphon repeated. During the Middle Ages it was shortened considerably and lost its function as an entrance hymn.

Invocation: From the Latin, "to call upon." Used at the beginning of many, though not all, services. It serves as a reminder of Baptism and may be accompanied by the sign of the cross.

Kyrie eleison (KEE-ree-ay ay-LAY-ee-zon): From the Greek, it is a direct address to God, meaning "Lord, have mercy." The ten lepers, blind man Bartimaeus, and others addressed Jesus with these words. The Kyrie appears early in the Divine Service. It is not part of the confession of sins but a cry to God to have mercy on us and all humanity.

Lectern: The lectern is the reading stand from which the Word of God is read. In some churches it is highly ornamented, though usually less so than the pulpit.

Liturgy: In the Lutheran Confessions, liturgy is defined as "public service" in the sense that the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments is God's service done on behalf of His people. Sometimes the word is used to denote an order of service, though the more specific terms "order of service" or "ordo" are preferred.

Means of Grace: The means of grace ordained by God are the Word of the Gospel, in every form in which it is brought to man, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and of the Lord's Supper.

Lord's Supper: See above, Eucharist.

Narthex: Greek for "enclosure." The narthex is an entryway or gathering room that leads into a church.

Nave: From the Latin "navis" which means ship. The nave is the main section of a church where the worshipers are gathered. The term may have derived from the ship-like appearance of early naves or from the early church understanding of the church as the ark of salvation.

Nicene Creed (nye-SEEN): Composed in A.D. 325 at a council of bishops (pastors) in Nicaea as a defense against the false teaching that Jesus was not true God. The creed was expanded to its present form at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. It has been used in the Divine Service as a corporate confession of the faith for centuries.

Nunc Dimittis (noonk di-MIT-iss): Latin for "now dismiss." These are the words spoken by Simeon as he held the 40-day-old Jesus in his arms (*Luke 2:25-35*). One of the New Testament canticles, it was traditionally used in the daily service of Compline and as an alternate to the Magnificat in Vespers. In the Lutheran Church it is also appointed for use following the distribution of the Lord's Supper.

Propitiatory: from "propitiation" meaning an atoning sacrifice.

Sanctuary: From the Latin "sanctuarium" meaning "a holy place." Refers to the area surrounding the altar, which is often enclosed by a communion rail, setting it off from the nave, the place where the people are seated.

Sanctus (SAHNK-tus): A Latin word meaning "holy." The Sanctus is the liturgical song sung at the beginning of the communion liturgy. It is drawn from the song of the angels in *Isaiah 6:3*. The concluding text, "blessed is He who comes..." is from *Psalms 118:26* and *Mark 11:9-10*.

Triumphal arch: The arch in a basilican church structure separating the nave from the chancel, to distinguish earthly from heavenly places.

Trinity: On the basis of the Holy Scriptures we teach the sublime article of the Holy Trinity; that is, we teach that the one true God, *Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4*, is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons, but of one and the same divine essence, equal in power, equal in eternity, equal in majesty, because each person possesses the one divine essence entire, *Colossians 2:9, Matthew 28:19*. *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (Adopted 1932)*

Word and Sacrament: See Means of Grace, above.

