

WHAT IS A LUTHERAN?

Lutherans trace their roots back to the sixteenth century when Martin Luther, an Augustinian Roman Catholic monk, challenged some of the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1517 Luther attached ninety-five theses (or propositions) to the front door of the church in Wittenburg, Germany. Luther's bold actions were the spark that ignited the Protestant Reformation throughout Europe. In many recent surveys celebrating the new millennium, Luther has been chosen as one of the most influential thinkers and leaders of the last thousand years.

Luther initially wanted the Roman Catholic Church to reform itself from within, but after several tumultuous years of heated debates, the "reformers" decided it was time to start a new church denomination. Luther wanted this new denomination to be called the Evangelical Church, but over time, Lutheran became the common name for the denomination.

Lutherans hold a number of teachings in common with the vast majority of Christian denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. Many of the differences in Christian denominations are not so much over differences in core beliefs, but rather, over differences in tradition, style, and emphasis.

WHAT IS THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA)?

In 1988, the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America merged to form the ELCA.

Now 30 years later, the ELCA is a church that shares a confidence in God's grace. As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ in order to serve and love our neighbor. With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in the name of Jesus throughout the world.

Lutherans in American trace their roots back to the mid-17th century, when Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia began to emigrate to the U.S.

Through a series of mergers the ELCA has become one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with about 4 million members in nearly 10,000 congregations across the United States, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Shepherd of the Hill is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

ELCA'S TEACHINGS AND VALUES

The ELCA confesses the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In our preaching and teaching the ELCA trusts the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

The ELCA's teaching or theology serves the proclamation and ministry of this faith. It does not have an answer for all questions, not even all religious questions. Teaching prepares members to be witnesses in speech and in action of God's rich mercy in Jesus Christ.

Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources, and our love of God and neighbor.

For additional information please visit the ELCA website at:

<http://www.elca.org/>

ELCA'S VALUES

Forgiveness and reconciliation — We are reconciled to God by God's forgiving mercy.

Dignity, compassion and justice — Each person is created in God's image. We respect this God-given right to dignity and, inspired by the life of Jesus, show love and compassion for all people.

Inclusion and diversity — As Christ's church, we value the richness of God's creation and offer a welcome to all people, appreciating our common humanity and our differences.

Courage and openness to change— Because we trust in God's promise and understand faith to be a living, daring confidence in God's grace, we are emboldened to embrace learning and change in our spiritual and institutional journey as a church.

Faithful stewardship of God's creation and gifts — As a church, faithful stewardship is about holding to God's purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other, and those served by this church.

WE ARE A CHURCH THAT ROLLS UP OUR SLEEVES AND GETS TO WORK.

The ELCA has a long history of being present in communities, working to help and serve where the needs are greatest.

Examples of this work are:

ELCA Malaria Campaign,
ELCA World Hunger,
HIV and AIDS Ministry,
Lutheran Disaster Response,
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and other
Social Ministry Organizations

Lutheran Social Services in America is one of the largest health and human service networks in the country. Our members span the spectrum of care providing critical services in communities across the country, such as:

Senior Services,
Health Care Services,
Immigration & Refugee Services,
Children, Youth & Family Services,
Disability Services,
Housing & Community Development,
Economic Empowerment Services

God's Work – Our Hands

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)



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