
The Augsburg Confession

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Introduction:

In the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Article II, Confession of Faith, it states:

- “Section 1:* This church confesses the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver, His Son, Jesus Christ, as Redeemer and Lord; and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.
- Section 2:* The Church Confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God's saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.
- Section 3:* This Church confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.
- Section 4:* This Church subscribes to the documents of the *Book of Concord* of 1580 as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood, explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely
- a. The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
 - b. The unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
 - c. Luther's Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
 - d. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord, as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.”

Moreover, when a person of the ELCIC is consecrated as a minister of Word and Service (as a Diaconal Minister) or ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament (as a Pastor), they are asked the following question:

- P** The Church in which you are to be consecrated [ordained] confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions?
- R** **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

What are these *Lutheran Confessions* and what does it mean to be a “confessional” church? This course will begin with a discussion on the place and authority of confessions for a church, and a very brief historical introduction to the primary reformation document of the *Book of Concord*, the *Augsburg Confession*. The majority of the class will focus on the theology of this document. You will also have the opportunity to discuss the relevance of *Lutheran Confessions* for the church today, and how they are an integral part of the gifts which the Lutherans bring to the table of ecumenical dialogues.

Student Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the Lutheran understanding of the authority of Scripture, the Creeds and the Lutheran Confessions, as required according to the ELCIC constitution
2. Identify, describe and explain the main issues in each of the articles of the *Augsburg Confession*
3. Explain and differentiate the key theological issues formulated in the *Augsburg Confession*
4. Articulate how the *Augsburg Confession* is still applicable today for church and society.

Required Texts:

The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, eds, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Charles P. Arand, Robert Kolb, and James A. Nestingen, eds, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of The Book of Concord.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Supplementary Text: *(Helpful for further study)*

Günther Gassmann and Scott Hendrix, *Fortress Introduction to the Lutheran Confessions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary.* John H. Rasmussen, translator (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987).

Assignments:

Your final mark will be determined by the following assignments:

1. **Responses to the questions at the end of each ‘Lesson,’ along with any ‘follow up’ discussion questions raised by the professor after reading your responses.** These question/answer dialogues are worth **50%** of your final mark.
2. **A 2500 word paper** (10 pages, typed, 12 point proportional font, double spaced), with appropriate references and footnotes or endnotes, **on a theological issue** discussed in the *Augsburg Confession*. The primary focus of research is to be the *Augsburg Confession*, with additional research identifying what the *Augsburg Confession* and the other *Lutheran Confessional* documents have to say on the topic you have chosen. This paper is due at noon after you have completed the second-last lesson, and is worth **30%** of your final grade.

3. **Either a Sermon or an Adult Study** that addresses a central theological or practical issue addressed by one or more articles of the *Augsburg Confession*. The sermon or study should be typed (4-6 pages total, typed, 12 point proportional font, double spaced) and reflect a thorough understanding of the *Augsburg Confession* and the context of those listening to the sermon. This sermon or adult study is worth **20%** of your final mark, and is due no later than one month after the last lesson is completed.

The response questions will be submitted and responded to through the internet program. The paper and the sermon or adult study, however, are to be submitted either by mailing it to the professor, or by emailing them in electronic form to the professor, in *Word* or *pdf* format. In either case, please insure that you get a confirmation from the professor that he received them.

Basic Working Bibliography

Allbeck, Willard D., *Studies on the Lutheran Confessions* (1952)

Anderson, Charles S. *Faith and Freedom: The Christian Faith According to the Lutheran Confessions* (1977)

Word Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982)

Braaten, Carl E. *Principles of Lutheran Theology*, 2nd Edition (2007)

Burgess, Joseph A., ed. *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views* (1980)

Fagerberg, Holsten, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions, 1529-1537* (1972)

Forde, Gerhard, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life*, (1982)

Forell, George W. *The Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary*. (1968)

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1997)

Kraus, George R. *Augsburg For Our Day: A Study of the Augsburg Confession* (1978)

LWF Report 9 (June, 1980). "Confession Augustana 1530-1980: Commemoration and Self-Examination"

Mildenberger, Friedrich, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (1986)

Preus, Robert. *Getting into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord*. (1977)

Sasse, Hermann. *"This is My Body": Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar*. (1959)

Scaer, David P. *Getting into the Story of Concord: A History of the Book of Concord*. (1977)

Schlink, Edmund. *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*. (1961)

Schmidt, John. *The Lutheran Confessions: Their Value and Meaning*. (1956)

Tappert, Theodore G. *The Lord's Supper: Past and Present Practice*. (1961)

Vajta, Vilmos, and Hans Weissgerber, *The Church and the Confessions: The Role of the Confessions in the Life and Doctrine of the Lutheran Churches* (1963)

Wengert, Timothy J., *A Formula for Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations*. Lutheran Quarterly Books, Paul J. Rorem, ed., (2006)

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church),” *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities*. (1966), 14-101.

Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World),” *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities*. (1966), 199-308

Many of the most valuable scholarly articles on the topic of the Lutheran Confession are found in Academic Journals. Please consult them in your research. Commonly, you will find pertinent articles in: *Lutheran Quarterly*; *Concordia Theological Monthly*; *Concordia Journal*; *Currents in Theology and Mission*, and *Word and World*. Please check ATLA for specific references.

Internet Sites of Interest:

Book of Concord Historical Introductions by F. Bente:

<http://www.ctsfw.edu/etext/boc/intros/>

The Book of Concord (Triglot Concordia, English Translation, Latin and German versions of the CA)

<http://www.ctsfw.edu/etext/boc/>

Dr Jensen’s website (look under the tab ‘Resources’ and then \Lutheran Confessions’ at www.gjlts.com)

Standardized Referencing to the ‘Symbols’ of the Book of Concord:

CA or AC	Augsburg Confession	LC	Large Catechism
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession	FC	Formula of Concord
SA	Schmalkald (or Smalcald) Articles	FC-Ep	Formula of Concord - Epitome
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope	FC-SD	Formula of Concord - Solid Declaration
SC	Small Catechism	BC	Book of Concord

How do I make a reference to them? Follow these steps for references to the *Augsburg Confession* and the other documents in the *Book of Concord*:

1. List reference by Symbol (e.g. AC)
2. For references to the *Formula of Concord*, list whether it is from the *Epitome* or the *Solid Declaration*; and for references to the *Smalcald Articles*, list whether it is from Part I, II, or III.
3. List what Article you are referring to
4. Give the paragraph/sentence number, which is found in the margin of the book.

so: the sentence beginning with, “For God will regard...” from Article 4 of the Augsburg Confession is listed as: AC 4:3, or CA 4:3

likewise, the sentence beginning with, “These and many similar things...” from the Schmalkald Articles, part 3, article 1, is listed as: SA III:I.11 or SA 3:I:11