



Deaf Missions
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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DIT Glossary Commonly Used Words

last updated October 2007
See also the [Christian Cyclopedia](#)

WORDS IN CAPS show how something can be signed.
Words in bold give related words to look up.

A

Absolution: Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Triune God; usually done at the beginning of the service after the confession. The pastor says, "I a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you; and in the stead (in the name of) and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Can be signed FORGIVE. See John 20:23.

Actual Sin: The sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions a person has and does. Also see **original sin**.

Adiaphora: Things that God doesn't command or forbid, but can be helpful for the church. For example, whether there is a cross in front of the church or not, or there are banners in the church, is adiaphora.

Advent: The season before Christmas, looking toward the coming of our Lord.

Aeon/eon: An immeasurably or indefinitely long period of time.

Agape: The Greek word for unconditional love.

Agnostic: A person who says they don't know if there is a God or not.

Alleluia: See **Hallelujah**.

Amen: In the Lutheran Church, signed like Prayer, 2 hands palms together.

Amillennialism: The belief that the Millennium (1000 year reign of Christ after his second coming) is not a literal 1000 years but means the time of the church, from Christ's ascension into heaven until He comes again. Revelation 20:4 "And I saw the souls of those who had died, and they reigned with Christ 1000 years." The Lutheran church is amillennial.

Anabaptist: A sect (religious group) that started in 1520 in Saxony, which rejected infant baptism and rebaptized those who joined the sect.

Angel: A special holy servant of God. The word means “messenger.” Angels are spiritual beings, but can appear in bodily form when appearing to people. The Bible mentions special groups of angels named cherubim and seraphim. See also **demons**.

Anthropocentric: “Man centered.” Focused on people.

Antichrist: “Against Christ.” Any person, attitude, or spirit which actively works to oppose Christ and the Christian Gospel. “The Antichrist” also refers to a person who, in the **End-Times**, will rise to prominence, may pretend to be Christ, require worship as god, demonstrate miraculous power, and inspire persecution against all true believers in Christ.

Apocrypha: Books that are not part of the Bible. Apocrypha books are written to look like scripture. Some of them are included in the Roman Catholic Bible.

Apologetics: Defending the Christian faith with intellectual and reasonable information, answering criticisms of Christianity.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Abbreviated AP. Explanation and defense of the Augsburg Confession, written in 1531 by Philip Melanchthon. The longest and most important article is Article IV, Justification. The AP was included in the **Book of Concord** in 1580.

Apostasy: From the Greek word “*to desert a post*”. Generally refers to people who say they are Christians, but later they turn away from Christ, becoming unbelievers.

Apostles’ Creed: One of the three creeds the Christian church believes. “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only true Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God. From thence He shall come to judge the quick (living) and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.”

Apostolic: One of the four marks (signs) of the Christian church along with holiness, unity, and catholicity. Refers to the church keeping the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42), a permanence of the Gospel.

Apotheosis: From the Greek meaning “to create a God” or “to deify”. The idea that a human can become a god. Relating to the deification of a hero symbolizing human beings or the deification of a living person at some point in their life.

Arianism: An early church heresy (false teaching) that said that the Father created the Son, so Jesus would not be true God. The First Council of Nicea (a.d.325) and First Council of Constantinople (a.d.381) condemned this teaching.

Arians: Followers of Arius’ ideas theories. (See **Arians** and **Arius**.)

Arius: (250-336) A priest at Alexandria, Egypt. Taught that God the Father made Christ, and that Christ is not true God. The First Council of Nicea (a.d.325) and First Council of

Constantinople (a.d.381) condemned Arius' teaching.

Arminianism: The teaching of Arminius in the 1600's that people have free will and can choose to believe in Jesus or not. Calvinists and Arminians were the forerunners of modern day Baptists.

Article of Faith: A believed doctrinal statement, or a creed or confession.

Athanasian Creed: Written in the 6th or 7th century to support the Trinity. It is much longer than the Apostle's Creed.

Athanasius: (293-373) Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. Athanasius supported the orthodox view of Christ and opposed Arianism. (See **Arius**)

Atheism: The belief that there is no God.

Atlas: A Bible atlas is a book of maps and history for places in the Bible.

Atonement: Jesus' offering of Himself to pay for our sins.

Auden, W.H.: (1903-1973) Poet

Augsburg Confession: 1530; Written by Melanchthon and approved by Luther and seven princes. It is a basic Lutheran confession of faith. The first part contains 21 articles of faith and the second part contains seven principal abuses calling for reform. It was included in the **Book of Concord** in 1580. Abbreviated AC.

Axiology: Studying values, what is important to people, and what is right and wrong.

B

Baptism: The Lutheran Church practices infant baptism, not immersion. Therefore the sign for baptism is WATER SPRINKLE-ON-HEAD.

Baptismal Regeneration: God gives us new life through baptism, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Begotten: "Beget" or "Begotten" means to become someone's father. God the Son is begotten from the Father. This doesn't mean that the Son was literally born from the Father. Begotten, or only-begotten, shows the special relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

Bestow: To place a gift upon someone.

Bishop: (1) Overseer for several churches in a geographic area. Bishop in the Catholic church is signed like KISS-FIST, kissing the ring. (2) Bishop in the Lutheran church is either the Church president or a pastor supervising a **vicar**. (3) A Biblical word for **pastor**.

Book of Concord: The book that has the major writings of the early Lutheran Church that explain what the Lutheran Church believes, put together in 1580. Also see **Lutheran**

Confessions.

Breaking Bread: In ancient times, bread was a main food and a large loaf was torn or broken to give some bread to each person. Breaking bread can mean (1) a family or friends sharing a meal, or (2) the **Lord's Supper**.

Bubonic Plague: A serious disease, spread by infected fleas on rats, that spread through Europe several times and killed millions of people from the 1300's to the 1500's.

C

Calvinism: The teaching from John Calvin (around the year 1550). Calvin taught that 1) God chooses in advance whom he will save and whom he will damn, 2) God chooses only certain people for whom Christ died (particular redemption - not for the whole world) 3) People are completely sinful, 4) people cannot refuse God's grace, 5) final perseverance (if people whom God has to save fall away from faith in Christ, God will restore them to faith and save them anyway). People that believe all 5 points are called 5 point Calvinists.

Canon: The books included in the Old Testament and New Testament of the Bible.

Cappadocian: Leading theologians in the fourth century (AD 300) located in Cappadocia. They supported the true teaching about the Trinity, against Arianism. These especially included Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil the Great.

Cardinals: Group of Roman Catholic leaders and advisors to the pope. They also elect popes.

Casuistry: Solution of clerical problems (clergy problems) through conscience, discussion and application of Scriptural principals.

Catechesis/Catechetics: The teaching of the faith.

Catechism: A book of teachings of the faith. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism. The Lutheran Church uses the Small Catechism for confirmation classes. Can be signed like TEACH, initialized with a C.

Catechumen: A student of the catechism.

Catholic: Can mean Roman Catholic or can mean Christian, depending upon how it is used. Large "C" Catholic means the Roman Catholic Church. Small "c" catholic means the whole Christian church.

CITI: Church Interpreter Training Institute (see below)

Charisma: The Greek word for gifts. The term charismatic comes from this and originally just meant gifted, as in charismatic speaker.

Charismatic: From the Greek meaning "a gift" derived from *charisma*. A person stating they have received from the Holy Spirit spiritual gifts such as "speaking in tongues".

Chassis: Something that supports.

Chemnitz, Martin: Also known as the second Martin (after Martin Luther) he helped to define Lutheran theology in his writings (wrote the Harmony of the Gospels). Born in 1522.

Christ: The name for Jesus' office (work). Christ is the Greek word that means "**Messiah**," or "Anointed One."

Christendom: The whole body of the Christian church. It usually means all Christian churches and people of every denomination.

Christology: The study of the person and work of Christ.

Church Fathers: Early church pastors, teachers, and theologians.

Church Interpreter Training Institute: CITI, housed at Fort Wayne, Concordia Theological Seminary, a two-week, summer program that emphasizes how to interpret in religious settings.

Circuits: In the LCMS, smaller groups of churches in an area. Pastors usually meet monthly for study, casuistry, plan circuit events, etc. Monthly pastors meetings are called Winkles.

Commentary: A book that explains what a book of the Bible means, usually explaining chapter by chapter or verse by verse.

Communion: (1) Fellowship. (2) Communion is also another name for the **Lord's Supper**. Signed with an F or closed X hand, cross over the mouth.

Concordance: A book that shows where different words are used in the Bible. It can be signed like DICTIONARY, but with a C handshape.

Concupiscence: The human tendency to sin, and to desire what is sinful.

Confession: (1) Admit doing something wrong. Signed like ADMIT. (2) Say what you believe is true. Signed "TRUST, ANNOUNCE."

Confessions: See **Lutheran Confessions** and **Book of Concord**.

Confirmation: A child of approximately 12 or 13 confirms their faith after catechesis (instruction) in the basic teachings of the church. Confirmation is signed like ORDAIN, one or 2 B-hands on the top of the head (laying on of hands). Some then continue the sign with the dominant hand coming to rest on the back of the non-dominate fist.

Congregation: CHURCH-GROUP

Consecrate: To set apart, make holy.

Context: The words before and after a passage that help explain what that passage means. In general, anything connected with a writing, or event, or person, that helps you understand that thing.

Contextualize/contextualization: Applying the Bible to a person's situation.

Conversion: HEART CHANGE

Council: (1) Church leaders from the whole church meeting together to decide important issues. (2) Church leaders in a congregation.

Covenant: God's promise agreement with His people.

Credo: From the first word of the Apostles Creed in Latin meaning "I believe". A statement of faith such as the Apostle's Creed.

Creed: A confession (announcement) of faith.

Crux Theologorum: The cross of the theologians. In reference to the question "Why are some saved and not others?" this phrase is used because it is difficult to give an answer that satisfies human reason. The Lutheran perspective is that it's impossible to answer this question.

CTCR: Commission on Theology and Church Relations

D

Deacon/Deaconess: Signed like hospital with the D-hand, for the cross on the sleeve of the traditional outfit.

Deaf Institute of Theology: Signed DIT. A program in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) that trains Deaf people for service in the church, from small group leader, all the way up to ordination as pastor. Seminary courses are signed onto videotape in ASL and students work through courses, until they have completed as much of the program as they desire.

Demons: Demons are fallen angels who followed Satan, rebelled against God, and got thrown out of heaven. Also see **angels**.

Denominationalism: The movement where Protestant Christianity separated in to various church bodies (denominations).

Diaconate: Deacons and deaconesses. DEACON GROUP

Diakonia: Greek word for service, usually serving other people for God. Also see **leiturgia**.

Diaspora: Jews living outside the country of Israel. Signed like JEWISH PEOPLE SPREAD (scatter).

Didache: A book of teaching for new believers in the early church, probably from around 150 A.D. or earlier.

Dispensationalism: Biblical interpretation associated with J.N. Darby (1800-1882). Dispensationalists distinguish seven periods in biblical history where humans are tested in their

response to God's will. An important part of Dispensationalism is its teaching about **End Times**, the "**Rapture**" and the **Millennium**.

DIT: Deaf Institute of Theology (see above)

Divine: Something connected with God or coming from God.

Divine Revelation: Everything God tells us. If God didn't tell us these things, there is no way we could know.

Doctrine: Teaching of Scripture.

Dogmatic: Greek from *dokein*, "to think". Formalized study of the Christian faith or Scripture where structured beliefs are conveyed to the church.

Dogmatics: Presenting the doctrines of Scripture in logical order.

Donatists: A North Africa sect began by Donatus. Held belief that Christians that had fallen away need to be re-baptized, and sacraments were only official when a priest was a worthy individual

Doulos: Greek word for slave, or servant. It shows that we are servants of Christ and each other. In Deaf Pah! DIT, it is the fourth level of classes.

Doxology: Praise God from Whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts (ANGEL GROUPS), praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Dualistic: Two opposing factors or ideas used in a theory of interpretation. For example, good and evil, or God and Satan.

E

Ebionites: Comes from the Hebrew word for "poor". A Jewish group in the 1st Century, that emphasized the Law and considered Jesus a prophet only.

Ecclesiastical: Concerning the church and clergy.

Ecclesiology: Theology relating to the origin, nature, characteristics, and mission of the church.

Ecumenical / Ecumenism: (1) Coming from the whole Christian church. For example, the Nicene Creed is an ecumenical creed because the whole church met in 325/381 A.D. and agreed on that creed. (2) All churches meeting or gathering, across denominational lines; a movement to bring all different churches together.

Edifying: To instruct and improve especially in moral and religious knowledge.

Egalitarian: An idea that humans are equal in respect to social, political, and economic rights

and privileges.

Eisogesis: Putting your own ideas into a Bible text instead of studying to see what the text originally meant. Opposite of **Exegesis**.

ELCA: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (see below)

End Times: The Bible says the end times are from the first time Jesus came until His second coming at the end of the world. People usually use “End Times” to mean only the end of the world and 2nd coming of Christ. See **Eschatology**.

Environmentalism: A belief that we must be responsible to take care of the earth. For some people, this is like a religion and they believe the earth gives us life. For Christians, God gives us life and we take care of the earth because God gave us that responsibility.

Ephphatha Conference: Annual meeting of LCMS workers in Deaf ministry. Signed either E-C or E-hand down and C-hand across in the shape of a cross.

Episcopacy: A church government in which bishops prevail (have higher authority than the congregations).

Epistemology: The philosophical study of how we know things.

Epistle: Letter to a person or church in the New Testament.

Eschatological / Eschatology: Study of the **End Times**.

Essenes: A group of Jews who lived out in the desert from around 200 B.C. to 70 A.D. They were very conservative, very careful to follow the law, and looked forward to a Teacher of Righteousness and the Messiah coming. Some people think John the Baptist lived with this group for a while. See also **Pharisees**, **Sadducees**, and **Zealots**.

Eucharist: Greek for “thanksgiving” or “to give thanks”. A term for the **Lord’s Supper**. From the Greek *eu* meaning “good” and *charis* “gift.”

Evangelical: (1) Literally means “Good news” or “Good message.” (2) Historically, evangelical means the gospel, the good news about Jesus, or focused on the gospel. (3) Today it is also a term for churches that emphasize Jesus’ death for our salvation, a personal relationship with Jesus, mission work, and the Bible as God’s word and the only authority for our faith.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Signed ELCA. The ELCA is a church body that was the result of the merger of the ALC (American Lutheran Church), LCA (Lutheran Church in America) and ELIM (Evangelical Lutherans in Mission - a church that split from the LCMS because of the belief in the LCMS that the Scripture is inerrant). A liberal Lutheran body.

Evangelism: Telling non-Christians about Jesus in order to lead them to trust Him. Signed: E-hands from the mouth like announce, palm orientation away from the body.

Evolution: The belief that the universe and life created itself over billions of years.

Exegesis: Studying, analyzing, and interpreting the Bible.

Exile: Being forced to move from your home to another place or country, separated from your people.

Existentialism: A philosophy that emphasizes a person's own life, values their experiences more than anything else, says they have freedom and responsibility to make their own choices without someone else telling them how to choose.

Excommunication: To remove someone from fellowship in the church. A person can no longer be a member of the church, either because they don't have faith in Jesus as their Savior, or their life shows they deny Jesus and will not follow Him. Can be signed RELATIONSHIP BROKEN.

Exorcism: Casting or throwing out an evil spirit.

F

Feministic Theology: Looking at theology from a feminism perspective. This can mean emphasizing women's role in religion, women's leadership in the church, and even talking about God like God is a woman. Feministic theology is usually against traditional Bible teachings.

Filioque: Latin for "and from the Son". This phrase was inserted into the Nicene Creed in 589 at the Council of Toledo. "And from the Son" asserts that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Eastern Church did not accept this insertion and has remained split from the Western Church since the 11th Century.

Forensic Justification: Like a judge announcing a person is innocent, God declares a sinner is righteous because of Christ's work for that person.

Formula of Concord: Written in 1577, answered 12 questions that were dividing the Lutheran churches. There are two parts, the Epitome (a shorter summary) and the Solid Declaration (the longer, more detailed version). Included in the **Book of Concord** in 1580. Abbreviated FC.

Free Will: The teaching that people naturally have spiritual ability to choose God or Satan, good or evil. The Bible opposes that teaching and says we are naturally sinful and can only choose sin and evil. See **Arminianism**.

Fundamentalism: The part of reformed churches that require faith in certain basic teachings (fundamentals) of the Bible.

G

Genealogy: Family history.

Gnosticism: From the Greek word *gnosis* meaning "knowledge". This religion claimed to have a secret knowledge that only the more enlightened received from God delivered by the Spirit.

Denied the humanity of Jesus. It was one of the most dangerous heresies that challenged the early Christian church.

Great Commission: Jesus' words to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus told them in His authority to make disciples of all nations, by baptizing and teaching them about Jesus.

Guilt: Being responsible for doing wrong and deserving punishment. Signed with a G handshape against the heart.

H

Hallelujah: Hebrew for "Praise the Lord." Signed like PRAISE – CELEBRATE.

Heresy: False, incorrect teaching about God and the Bible. Signed FALSE TEACHING.

Hermeneutics: The method or principles of interpreting the Scripture.

Heterodox: Different teaching, or false teaching. See also **Orthodox**.

Homiletics: The study of sermons, or preparing sermons.

Homogenous: Of a similar kind or alike; similar origin.

Homoousios: A Greek word meaning "of one substance," used in the Nicene Creed to describe the Father and the Son as same substance, true God. The Creed emphasizes this doctrine against the Arian heresy that taught the Father and the Son were only similar substance (homoiousios) and were not the same.

Hosanna: Hebrew word that literally means, "Lord, save us!" Used as a word of praise.

Humanism: In Reformation times, Humanism was a new way of learning and education. It emphasized classical studies, languages, writing, etc., and improved the study of theology. Secular Humanism today emphasizes how people can do great things by themselves without God.

I

Idealism: A theory that ideas or thoughts are real, rather than material objects.

ILDA: See **International Lutheran Deaf Association**.

Image of God: God made people in His image, meaning He made people like Him to be good, to rule over the earth, to have loving relationships, to have knowledge, etc. These things were lost or corrupted (damaged) when Adam and Eve sinned.

Imputation: Attributed to. Christ's righteousness is attributed to (put upon) us.

Incarnation: God taking flesh, becoming a man. Jesus Christ took on the human flesh and was at the same time true God and true Man.

Indulgences: The selling of forgiveness by the Catholic Church in the 1500's. Martin Luther stood against indulgences and other offenses of the church and wrote 95 theses (statements of opinion) and nailed them to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. This act is considered the start of the Reformation.

Inerrant: Without error.

Infallible/Infallibility: Not able to make an error.

Iniquity: Sin.

International Lutheran Deaf Association: Signed ILDA. The ILDA has seven regions: Central, Dixie, Eastern, Great Lakes Midwest, Northwest, Pacific.

J

Jebusites: Ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem before David captured Jerusalem.

Jesus: The Son of God, true God and true Man, and the Savior of the world. The second article of the **Apostles' Creed** summarizes His work. The name Jesus means "God saves."

Justification: The teaching that Jesus' death and resurrection makes or announces us right with God. Also see **Objective Justification** and **Subjective Justification**.

K

Kant, Immanuel: (1724-1804) German philosopher whose philosophy has led to a popular view that religious beliefs and spiritual experiences are untestable, purely subjective, and cannot be explained and proven true without any doubt.

Kerygma: Greek word for the message of preaching, specifically the good news of Jesus.

Keys, Office of the: The authority given to the church to absolve (forgive) and excommunicate. (see **Absolution**)

Kierkegaard: (1813-1855) Danish philosopher; influenced 20th Century **existentialism** and **neo-orthodox** theology.

Koinonia: Greek word for fellowship, the close fellowship and relationship that Christians have with each other and with Christ.

L

Law and Gospel: The Law judges us guilty, condemns us and sentences us to hell. The Gospel is the news of Jesus dying and rising for us. Through the Gospel, God gives forgiveness, life, and heaven. Every sermon should have both Law and Gospel.

LCMS: The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Legalism, Legalistic: The law is more important than the gospel. Strictly following the law.

Leiturgia: (1) The worship service. (2) Any kind of service or work done for God. Also see **diakonia**.

Liberation Theology: A movement that says Jesus' main work and the church's main work is to help poor and oppressed people, especially through political work.

Liturgical Colors: Red for special days, ordination, installation, Reformation Day, and Maundy Thursday; white for Easter and Christmas and their seasons; blue for Advent (can be purple); purple for Lent (before Easter); black for Good Friday; green for Trinity or Pentecost (the season when we learn about the life of the New Testament Church, it begins on Pentecost Sunday and lasts until the Last Sunday in the Church Year in the Fall).

Liturgy: The worship service that is printed and followed. Signed like Certification with L-hands.

Logos: Greek word that can mean word, message, speaking. Used to describe Jesus as the Word of the Father.

Lord's Supper: Signed LORD EAT, or signed with an F or closed X hand, cross over the mouth. Also see **Communion**.

Luther, Martin: (1483-1546) German church reformer and creator of Protestantism. Several signs for him. Most common is M on the upper chest, L on the stomach.

Lutheran Confessions: The writings from the early Lutheran church that explain what the Lutheran church teaches and believes. Also see **Book of Concord**.

Lutheran Laymen's League: Signed LLL, also known as Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League: Signed LWML

Lutheran World Federation, The: A group of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition.

Lutheran: Signed L on the back of the hand like Church, or L against the palm of the non-dominate hand tip of thumb touching the palm, or L on the shoulder (Portland Oregon sign).

LWML: see **Lutheran Women's Missionary League**

M

Mass: The Roman Catholic word for a communion service.

Matins: The church service written for early morning.

Matrimony: Marriage.

Mediator: A third person who works between two opposing people, for the purpose of bringing the two sides together. Jesus is the Mediator between God and people.

Means of Grace: The ways God gives grace to His church (ways He brings salvation). The Word (scripture) and the Sacraments. Sacraments for Lutherans are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Sign CROSS with an S-handshape.

Melanchthon: (1473-1560) Greek scholar and leading Lutheran theologian.

Merit: Any good work or good thing we can offer to God to earn His favor. Roman Catholics are most well known for teaching we can earn merit and please God.

Messiah: From a Hebrew word that means, "Anointed One." The Messiah is the Savior that the Old Testament prophesied would come.

Millennia / Millennium: A 1,000 years.

Millennialism: Teaching there is a special 1,000 years that Christ and His church reign before the end of the world. There are different ways this is taught. See **Amillennialism**, **Pre-millennialism**, and **Post-millennialism**.

Ministry: Service or work, especially service in the church or a pastor's work. Sometimes signed like SERVE with M-hands. Sometimes signed like WORK with M-hand on top.

Missionary / Missions: The work of telling groups of people the good news about Jesus. Signed with an M circled on the non-dominant shoulder like CHARACTER.

Missouri Synod: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. (commonly signed LCMS).

Modalism: Heretical belief of the Trinity that God revealed himself in three different modes at different times appearing first as Father, then as Son, and finally as Holy Spirit. This denies that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinctly different persons of the Godhead.

Modernism: A liberal movement in the 1800's and 1900's that said God does not give us truth; people must study and search for truth themselves. Modernism doubted traditional Christianity and said we are smart enough to find truth and true religion on our own.

Monism: Unity of things; generally cited in the case of pantheism (the nature of all things is one)

Monotheism: Belief in only one God. Jews and Christians understand this in different ways. Judaism says God is one being and one person. Christianity views God as one being, but

having three persons.

Mortal Sin: "Deadly sin." The Roman Catholic teaching that certain sins destroy faith and cause spiritual death.

N

Narcissism: Loving yourself a lot.

Nascent: Coming into existence, or having recently come into existence.

National Council of Churches: A group of churches in the United States that works together on social issues and promoting **Ecumenism**.

Neo-Orthodoxy: "New Orthodoxy." A movement in the 1900's against **Modernism**, trying to go back to **orthodox** (correct) teachings. Karl Barth was one of the most important leaders of this.

New Age: A belief in a "new" kind of spirituality. New Age beliefs can include belief in Eastern religions and philosophy, meditation, reincarnation, space aliens, witchcraft and earth religions, and more. They also often believe all religions lead to the same god.

Nicene Creed: One of the three creeds the Christian church believes. This creed emphasizes that Jesus is true God and Man; "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God (true), begotten (born) not made. Being of one substance with the Father by Whom all things were made; who for us men (people) and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man..." This creed is the church's confession against the **Arian** heresy.

Nihilism: A philosophy that says the world and life has no meaning or value. Friedrich Nietzsche is a famous teacher of nihilism.

Nunc Dimittis: A canticle (song) that is part of the communion liturgy. It comes from Simeon who said: Now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, that you have prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

O

Objective Justification: Justification is the teaching that Jesus' death and resurrection makes us right with God. Objective justification says that it was all God's work from beginning to end and we did nothing to make God save us. Also see **Subjective Justification**.

Office of the Keys: The power God gave the church to forgive or retain (not forgive) sins. See Matthew 16:19 and John 20:23, also see **Confession** (admits God's condemnation) and **Absolution** (mercy of God's forgiveness).

Office of the Ministry/Office of Holy Ministry: A pastor's work and responsibility.

Omnipotence: "All power." God is all-powerful.

Omnipresence: "Present everywhere." God is everywhere at the same time.

Omniscience: "All knowing." God knows everything.

Ontology: The philosophical study of being, what it means to "be" something or someone, what it means to exist.

Order of Worship: The form of the worship service. The order of worship may be Matins, Vespers (an evening service), Communion (generally page 15 in The Lutheran Hymnal TLH, or page 158 in the Lutheran Worship LW), or a service without communion (pg 5 TLH, pg 158 LW minus the communion liturgy). Generally Deaf churches don't get into that because they have their own translation, but hearing churches that have interpreters do. Also see **Liturgy**.

Ordain / Ordination: The ritual in which the church recognizes a person as a pastor of the church. Ordination occurs shortly after graduation from seminary. Signed like confirmation, hand on the head for laying on of hands. Installation is when a pastor is installed at a new parish, not necessarily ordained. Put the appropriate word (ordination, installation or confirmation) on your lips when you sign this sign.

Original Sin: Sin inherited from Adam. Original sin means we desire to do **actual sin**, and we are truly sinful and guilty from conception (Psalm 51:5).

Orthodox: Right thinking, or right believing. The word is used several ways. (1) Following the traditional and correct faith. (2) The Eastern Orthodox Church. (3) Orthodox Judaism, the more strict and traditional group of Judaism.

P

Pagan: People who do not believe in Jesus, the promised Savior. Or in a more specific meaning, people who follow a religion that worships nature or cycles in nature.

Pantheism: The belief that God and the natural world (the universe) are one, that nature is God (see **Monism**); denies the personality of God.

Papacy/Papal/Pope: Head of the Roman Catholic Church. Signed like POPE, the shape of the large miter (hat) on his head. 2 hands arching upwards above the head to a point at the top.

Papists: People who accept the pope's authority.

Parables: Stories with simple and common things, used to teach truths about heaven, God, salvation, etc.

Parochial School: CHURCH SCHOOL

Pascal: (1623-1662) French literary philosopher and scientist. Believed people should be

driven to believe in God not just by intellect but spiritual intuition.

Parallelism: Two phrases or sentences that go together, especially in Hebrew poetry. The second line often is more clear, more specific, or explains more about the first line.

Paul of Samosata: An excommunicated (268 A.D.) Bishop of Antioch from 260-272. He held a heretical belief that God worked through Jesus but that Jesus was not the second person of the Trinity. He believed the three parts of the Trinity were Father, Wisdom, and Word.

Pelagius: (354-420) Argued that humans were essentially good and had free will to do good and gain merit toward God.

Penitent: Sorry for sins.

Pentateuch: The first 5 books of the Bible.

Pentecostal: Similar to a Charismatic, emphasizing that the Holy Spirit gives supernatural spiritual gifts such as “speaking in tongues”.

Pericope: A series of Bible readings for every Sunday in the church year. The readings repeat on either a one year or three year cycle.

Pertinent: Something that is important to an issue or subject.

Pharisees: A main group of Jews at the time of Jesus. They were very strict and careful to obey the law. They also believed in angels, miracles, and the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world. Also see **Sadducees**, **Essenes**, and **Zealots**.

Philosophy: Philosophy is from a Greek word that means “love of wisdom.” Philosophy searches for knowledge and understanding and logical explanations for everything. Pure philosophy says we must work with what we know and not what God tells us.

Pietism: Strong **legalistic** movement in 1600’s and 1700’s that emphasized a right Christian life. It was a reaction against **Orthodoxy** and said right beliefs isn’t enough; a right life is more important. Philipp Jacob Spener was the first important leader. Today, pietism means a legalistic focus on having a right Christian life.

Pilgrimage: (1) Travel to a holy place for a spiritual purpose, such as a trip to Israel. (2) A Christian’s journey in life, knowing that we are not home in heaven yet.

Pluralistic: Having various religious confessions, culture, and values. Example, a pluralistic society has many different beliefs, values, etc.

Plurality: Allowance for recognition of different religious beliefs dictated by your own conscience.

Pneumatology: A theological term derived from the Greek word *pneuma*, spirit. Usually means study about the Holy Spirit, but can also mean study of the human spirit, soul, or self.

Polemics: Controversial theology. The methods of argument as applied to controversy in the church. Could be signed as an emphatic DISCUSSION. If it is a one-way discussion it could be

signed as LECTURE or PREACH modified on the lower face for intensity or puffed cheeks.

Polytheistic / Polytheism: A belief in more than one God (vs. **monotheism**, which is belief in one God).

Post-Christian Culture: A view held in the late 20th Century that many people think Christian beliefs and values are not very important.

Post-millennialism: Teaching about the **end times**. Says that the church will rule on earth for a literal 1,000 glorious years, then come 7 years of tribulation (trouble), then Jesus comes and this world ends.

Predestination: The teaching that God chooses people for salvation. A person's salvation then depends on God choosing them, not on that person choosing God. John Calvin taught Double Predestination, meaning God chooses people for heaven and chooses other people for hell. Lutherans teach Single Predestination, meaning God chooses people for heaven, but other people go to hell because of their own refusal to believe. God does not choose people for hell. Other churches reject predestination and believe some form of **Arminianism**.

Preeminent: Viewing an idea or person in supreme importance. Paul viewed Christ as preeminent.

Pre-millennialism: Teaching about the **end times**. Says that Jesus comes and takes all believers to heaven (the **rapture**), then come 7 years of tribulation (trouble), then Christ and the church reign for 1,000 years, then the end of the world.

Presupposition: Assumption a person brings to a viewpoint or argument.

Priesthood of all Believers: All Christians become kings and priests in His kingdom and can come to Him themselves. See 1 Peter 2:9, Romans 12:1-2.

Profession of Faith: To say what you believe publicly. SAY FAITH or ANNOUNCE FAITH.

Prolegomena: An introduction or beforehand statement.

Prophecy: A message, God's word, that a prophet announces. The prophet is a messenger whom God chooses to speak for Him. Prophecy can be a message about future events, but doesn't have to be.

Propitiation: Atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus that satisfies God and forgives our sins.

Protestant: In 1529 at the Second Diet (meeting) of Speyer, the Roman Catholic church tried to take back some freedoms they allowed the Lutheran churches. The Lutherans protested, and so became known as the Protestant church. Today, Protestant usually means any Christian church that is not Roman Catholic.

Protological: Revealed doctrine of "first things" (in contrast to **eschatology** – last things).

Purgatory: The Roman Catholic church teaches that Jesus forgives our sins and frees us from eternal punishment, but we must still suffer earthly punishments for our sin. Purgatory is a place where people finish those punishments so they can be clean (purged) and enter heaven.

The Lutheran church does not believe this.

Q

Quatenus Subscription: Quatenus means “in so far as.” Means a person subscribes (agrees with) the **Lutheran Confessions** only as much as they are a clear and correct explanation of the Bible’s teaching. This assumes that the confessions are not always a correct explanation of Scripture.

Quia Subscription: Quia means “because.” We subscribe to (agree with) the **Lutheran Confessions** because they are a clear and correct explanation of the Bible’s teaching.

R

Radicals, Radical Reformers: Reformers who thought Martin Luther didn’t make enough changes, so they made many more reforms. Most of these reformers were **Anabaptists**.

Rapture: The teaching that Jesus will take believers from earth to heaven, and non-believers will be left on earth. This is a teaching in **pre-millennialism**.

Real Presence: Christ’s body and blood are truly present in the Lord’s supper and are not merely represented by the bread and the wine. His body and blood are in, with, and under the bread and wine. **Transubstantiation** (Catholic doctrine) teaches that the bread and wine transform into (become) the body and blood in their essence.

Reconcile / Reconciliation: An act of two parties in conflict becoming friends again.

Redeem / Redemption: Buy back. Signed like salvation with R-hands.

Reformation: When the Lutheran Church broke away from the Catholic Church during Martin Luther’s time. Should be fingerspelled. It is sometimes signed like CHANGE with R handshapes, but this is the same sign as “repent” and can be confused.

Reformed Church: (1) Churches related to Calvin and Zwingli. This usually means churches that believe the **Lord’s Supper** is spiritual communion with Christ. (2) Various churches from the Netherlands are named Reformed Churches.

Reformers: Those who were part of the Reformation, which called for reorganization of the church based on the Word of God. Martin Luther was the strongest advocate. Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and others are also named as Reformers.

Reincarnation: The belief that when a person dies, their soul is born again in a new body. This is a strong Hindu belief, that a person is reincarnated many times until they become good enough that they don’t need to be reincarnated again.

Relativism / Relativized: The idea that anything is true if you want it to be true. Relativism

rejects the idea of moral right and wrong, so there is no basis for ethical judgments.

Remnant: A small group of believers who remain faithful, even though many others turn away from God. The Bible shows examples of God punishing the many unfaithful people, but always saving the remnant, the small group of faithful people.

Repent / Repentance: Turn heart and life away from sin to God in faith and obedience. Sign SORRY with intensity, or can be signed CHANGE (X-handshapes turning together) with R handshapes.

Repudiation: The refusal of public authorities to accept or pay a debt.

Resurrection: A dead person rising alive again, both body and soul. Resurrection usually refers to Jesus' resurrection, or the resurrection of all people at the end of the world.

Revelation: (1) Special information communicated by God; sign "prophecy" or "God inform."
(2) St. John's prophetic book about the end times. Abbreviate it REV.

Rhetoric: The study on *how* something is said – usually describing style of lectures, sermons, or speeches.

Righteousness: Right with God, without guilt or sin. God announces us righteous. Christ gives us His holy life to make us right and holy to God.

Rite: Ritual, formal ceremony.

Ritualism: Doing a religious activity, but your heart is not in it. Doing the act becomes important, but the act itself doesn't mean much to you.

Romanticism: A literary and theological movement that emphasizes feelings over reason.

S

Sabbath: (1) The holy day of rest, for the Jewish people it was the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Many Christians regard Sunday as the Sabbath. (2) Rest and relaxation.

Sabellius: A teacher that held **Modalist** belief that God reveals Himself in different Modes: first as Father, then as Son, and finally as Holy Spirit.

Sacrament: S-hand like a cross. For Lutherans there are two sacraments: Lord's Supper and Baptism. Sometimes **Confession** and **Absolution** is also considered a sacrament. Sacrament means sacred act that God gave us to forgive sins. Both sacraments include a physical element combined with the Word and Holy Spirit. (The Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments.)

Sacristy: The part of the church that has everything necessary to prepare the front of church for worship – communionware, bread and wine, vestments (liturgical robes), paraments, etc.

Sadducees: A main Jewish group at the time of Jesus. The Sadducees were the priestly

leaders. They cooperated with Rome to rule Israel. They believed in the books of Moses (first 5 books in the Old Testament) but not the other books of the Bible. They didn't believe in angels, miracles, or the resurrection of the dead. See also **Pharisees**, **Essenes**, and **Zealots**.

Saint: Signed either HOLY AGENT or HOLY PERSON, or S-hand across the palm like the sign HOLY or CLEAN. Every Christian is a saint because of God's gift of holiness.

Sanctification: When the Holy Spirit works in a Christian's life to make them holy and set them apart for God's service. Sanctification continues through out a Christian's life. Often signed as MAKE HOLY but when reading the passage from John 17:19, when Jesus says, "I sanctify Myself" the meaning is "set apart for God."

Satis Est: "It is enough." "It is complete."

Schism: Split or separation. Splits in the church are called schisms. Can be signed SEPARATE.

Sect: A religious group that has special practices and beliefs.

Seminary: A school that prepares and teaches future pastors. COLLEGE with an S-hand.

Seraphim: Signed ANGEL or HIGH ANGEL for archangel (like the Cherubim).

Shema: Hebrew for "hear". The *Shema* is Deuteronomy 6:4 – "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One." This verse is recited by Jews as a confession of their **monotheistic** faith in God.

Sin of Commission: You sin by doing a wrong thing.

Sin of Omission: You sin because you don't do the right thing (James 4:17).

Smalcald Articles: One of the books of the Lutheran Confessions written by Martin Luther, in which he describes the reformer's position on important theological issues. Written in 1537, included in the **Book of Concord** in 1580. Abbreviated SA.

Sophia: The Greek word for wisdom. Some New Age groups worship the goddess Sophia (particularly those who study feminine theology).

Soteriology: Study of topics relating to eternal salvation.

Sovereign: The teaching that God is powerful and absolutely rules over everything. This is an important teaching in **Calvinist** churches.

Subjective Justification: Justification is the teaching that Jesus' death and resurrection makes us right with God. Subjective justification looks inside a person to see what happens to them when God gives them salvation. Is sometimes wrongly used to say a person does something to help save themselves.

Subordination(ism): The idea that Jesus Christ's nature is inferior to (less than) the Father. It is a heresy to believe that any part of the Trinity is inferior to another part.

Substitutionary: Jesus Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners.

Sunday School: Signed S – S in front of the body (same sign as Social Security).

Supererogation: A Roman Catholic tradition that some good works were worthy of more merit because they were done by free choice for the common benefit of the church. These were works of “extra credit” that went beyond what was expected of everyone in the Ten Commandments.

Syncretism: Mixing together different philosophical or religious views, especially means mixing Christianity with non-Christian religions.

Synergism: *Syn* = together, *ergo* = work. The doctrine that we work together with God to be saved. Lutherans reject this doctrine. It is all the work of Jesus by grace that gives us salvation, not our own doing. That is one reason Lutherans do not have altar calls because our salvation does not depend upon a prayer to accept Christ into our hearts. That is considered a synergistic act. We could not even begin to pray that prayer unless Christ was already in our hearts because up until that point we are dead in trespasses and sins.

Synergist: A title given to someone who thinks that the human plays a role in accepting the Spirit in conversion.

Synod: A gathering of believers into a church body. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is one specific church body, headquartered in St. Louis.

Systematics: The study or practice of organizing doctrines (teachings) of the church, making sure every doctrine is from the Bible and all the teachings fit together without contradiction.

I

Tabernacle: Signed: TENT. Can be a shrine or holy place that represents God's presence.

Talmud: The Jewish books of ancient rabbis that teach about the Jewish faith.

Tautology: (1) Repeating meaning in a statement or word (example, “free gift”). (2) A general statement that is always true, “Either it will rain tomorrow or it won’t rain tomorrow.”

Te Deum: A canticle (song) in the service of Matins that begins: We praise you O God, we acknowledge You to be the Lord . . .

Tenebrae Service: The worship service Good Friday evening where candles are extinguished until all are out and the church is dark, and the Christ candle is carried out, then a book is slammed shut to signify the closing of the tomb, then the Christ candle is carried in again. In an interpreted service, the interpreter must prepare ahead to have a small light ready.

Testimony: Story or witness, telling what you know.

Tetzel: A monk in Luther's day who sold **indulgences**. He said, "When the coin in the coffer

rings, another soul from purgatory springs!"

Textual Criticism: Researching the origin of the Scripture text, examining language, cultural aspects, etc. "Higher Criticism" says that parts of the Bible are not inerrant and may not be God's word. Our Synod split over this and there was a walkout at the St. Louis Seminary, February 19, 1974 where students and faculty formed a new seminary, Seminex (signed like Seminary with E-X on the end), which continued until the ELCA was formed.

Textual Exposition: Studying or explaining the meaning of the Bible text.

Theism: Any kind of belief in God. See **Atheism** and **Agnosticism** for opposite meanings.

Theocentric: "God centered." Focused on God.

Theodosian Code: Roman legal code (laws) issued in 438 A.D.

Theology: The study of God. Signed like RELIGION with a T-hand. A Theologian is a person who studies about God.

Tribulation: Distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution, within Scripture it was the suffering of God's people. In the study of **eschatology**, some churches teach that there will be a world-wide "Great Tribulation" under the reign of the **Antichrist**.

Trinity: God is three-in-one, three persons in one God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but not three Gods. He is only one God.

Thrivent: A life insurance company formed by the merger of Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood.

Transgression: Sin.

Transubstantiation: The Roman Catholic teaching that in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine become Jesus' body and blood. They are no longer bread and wine. Lutheran teaching says that all four are present at the same time, bread, body, wine and blood.

TULIP: A way of remembering the basic teachings of Calvinism. Total depravity (people are completely sinful), Unconditional election (predestination), Limited atonement (Jesus died for Christians only), Irresistible grace (God's grace can't be refused), Perseverance of the saints (once saved, always saved).

Type: Also called "antitype." A sign or example in the Old Testament that shows what Jesus will do or be like. For example, Moses was a "type" of Jesus because Moses saved God's people from slavery in Egypt, just as Jesus later saved us from slavery to sin. Or, the flood was a "type" of baptism, because God saved 8 people in the floodwaters, just as God saves us in baptism (1 Peter 3:20-21).

U

Unionism: Joining with other Christians even though they have different beliefs. See

syncretism.

Unsullied: Clean or unsoiled.

Utilitarian: An ethical theory begun in the 19th Century judging a consequence of an act as valid if it brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people.

V

Venial Sin: The Roman Catholic teaching that some sins will not destroy faith or cause spiritual death.

Vespers: A late evening service.

Vestments: Clerical attire: either an alb or cassock and surplice (alb is a long robe with a cincture or belt, cassock is a long black robe and surplice is a white top that covers the cassock). They usually also put on their stole (a long, narrow cloth worn over the neck, hanging down on both sides) and possibly a chasuble (a poncho-like vestment made out of the liturgical colors for the season, used for communion).

Vicar: In the Lutheran Church, a vicar is a pastor in training or an intern. Signed like ASSISTANT with a V-hand on the bottom. In the Catholic Church, the Pope is the Vicar of Christ (stands in the place of Christ).

Vicarious Atonement: Vicarious means, “in the place of.” Jesus Christ died for sinners, in their place.

Vicarious Satisfaction: Jesus’ death and resurrection for sinners. Jesus died in our place to satisfy God’s demands.

Vocation: Latin for the word “calling”. Your vocation is where God puts you in life, the work He calls you to do at home, church, and in society.

Voluntarism: The idea that a person’s will (desire) is stronger and more important than intelligence or emotion. God’s will is over all.

W

Walther League: The former youth group name. Now called LYF, Lutheran Youth Fellowship.

Walther, C. F. W.: (1811-1887) Lutheran Theologian. Considered the founder of the **LCMS**. A pastor in the 1800's, seminary professor, and first president of the LCMS.

Wisconsin Synod: Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

World Council of Churches: A group of churches around the world that works on various

social and political issues, and promotes Ecumenism (see **Ecumenical**).

Worms, Diet of: 1521 meeting in the city of Worms, Germany, where Luther was asked to recant (reject) his writings and come back to the Catholic Church. He said: "I will not recant . . . Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God." The Catholic church promptly excommunicated him.

Worship: Signed like the Jewish sign for prayer, hands folded, one over the other inflected for over-time. Prayer in the Lutheran Church is signed with palms together.

Wrath: Anger, judgment, punishment.

X

Y

Z

Zealots: A group of Jews whose main goal was to throw the Romans out of Israel. See also **Essenes**, **Pharisees**, and **Sadducees**.