

13. Church

What is the Church?

To the church of God in Corinth—those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, who are called as saints—along with all in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. (1 Corinthians 1:2)

God also placed all things under his feet and made him head over everything for the church. The church is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

Husbands, love your wives, in the same way as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, by cleansing her with the washing of water in connection with the Word. (Ephesians 5:25-26)

For by one Spirit we all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free people, and we were all caused to drink one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

The Church is not a _____ or an _____.

The Church is a _____ — all those who are _____ by _____ in _____.

Christ calls the Church his _____ and his _____.

How many Churches are there? _____

Can we see who belongs to the Church? _____

That is why we speak of Christ having one _____ Church.

What are churches?

All the churches of Christ greet you. (Romans 16:16)

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the plants sprouted and produced heads of grain, the weeds also appeared. The servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from?' He said to them, 'An enemy did this.' The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and gather up the weeds?' 'No,' he answered, 'because when you gather up the weeds, you might pull up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First, gather up the weeds, bind them in bundles, and burn them. Then, gather the wheat into my barn."' (Matthew 13:24-30)

Always keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves, who will not spare the flock, will come in among you. Even from your own group men will rise up, twisting the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Therefore be always on the alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped warning each one of you with tears. (Acts 20:28-31)

Like newborn babies, crave the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow up with the result being salvation. (1 Peter 2:2)

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples. (John 8:31)

How many churches are there?

Can we see who belongs to these churches? _____

So we say that there are many _____ churches.

Can there be any unbelievers in the Invisible Church? _____

Can there be any unbelievers in visible churches? _____

The reason that there are so many different kinds of churches is _____ teaching.

Jesus wants me to be part of a church which teaches _____ of God's Word in its truth and purity.

What is our relationship with churches which have some false teachings?

But I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the teaching that you learned, and keep away from them. (Romans 16:17)

Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. (Titus 3:10)

If someone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house. Do not even wish him well. For the one who wishes him well shares in his wicked works. (2 John 10-11)

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31)

What does it matter? Only this, that in every way, whether for outward appearance or for the truth, Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. (Philippians 1:18)

Jesus said to them, "Watch out and be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not warning them about the yeast in bread, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:6,12)

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ, for a different gospel, which is really not another gospel at all. (Galatians 1:6)

Churches are divided by _____ teaching.

So when someone teaches falsely, we are to recognize this division by _____ from them.

Being a false teacher is different from being weak in _____. Someone who is weak in knowledge, we patiently _____. However, someone who persistently and/or publicly advocates for false teaching, we must _____ from.

This separation applies to . . .

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In churches which mix truth and _____, we both _____ that they are hearing the _____, and also are very _____ about the _____ from the _____.

We view Christians in these churches neither as _____ nor as _____, but more like _____ relatives.

When we separate, we are not passing judgment on an individual's _____ but on their public _____.

We do this to give a clear confession of the truth . . .

1. To those _____ our fellowship.
2. To those _____ our fellowship.

Note: This separation applies not just to groups which call themselves churches, but also to religious organizations such as _____ and _____.

What is our relationship with those churches which teach the truth?

Look, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)

To be sure, we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. (2 Corinthians 13:8)

They continued to hold firmly to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have the habit of doing. Rather, let us encourage each other, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

They went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore, we have an obligation to support such men, so that we may be coworkers for the truth. (3 John 7-8)

One of God's great blessings to us is _____ with Christians who are united with us in the _____ of God's Word.

We enjoy fellowship with believers who teach and believe the same things we do by...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What larger church body is St. Stephen a part of?

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word. Be ready whether it is convenient or not. Correct, rebuke, and encourage, with all patience and teaching. For there will come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, because they have itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in line with their own desires. They will also turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

I did not hesitate to proclaim to you the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)

While there are many people who will tell others what they _____ to hear, we should want to hear and proclaim God's Word in keeping with the _____, whether this is _____ or not.

If I travel or move across the country, I will still want a church which teaches the _____, and an easy way to find that is by looking at what _____ a church is part of.

Our church body is called the _____, which stands for the W _____ E _____ L _____ S _____.

(There is also an ELS—the Evangelical Lutheran Synod which teaches and believes the exact same thing we do and a number of other synods in countries around the world with which we are united in the truth.)

I know that after my departure savage wolves, who will not spare the flock, will come in among you. Even from your own group men will rise up, twisting the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Therefore be always on the alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped warning each one of you with tears. (Acts 20:29-31)

As for you, continue in the things you have learned and about which you have become convinced. You know from whom you learned it and that from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, well equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Remember, however, that we must always be on the _____ for false teaching, because it usually comes from _____ the church. A church which once taught _____ may not always do so, so we must always _____ what a church and a pastor says against the _____.

The best way to be able to recognize false teaching is to immerse yourself in _____.

How can I know what a church believes?

We also believe, and therefore we speak. (2 Corinthians 4:13)

I ask that you all express the same view and not have any divisions among you, but that you be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. You do not gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles, do you? (Matthew 7:15-16)

The word "creed" means _____ in Latin. So a creed is a simply a summary of what a person _____.

Christians say creeds because . . .

- 1. They naturally want to _____ their faith.*
- 2. Creeds serve to _____ Christians on the basis of a shared _____.*
- 3. Creeds serve as a marker to _____ from _____.*

The creeds are not God's _____, but all the truths in these creeds come from God's _____.

There are three creeds which the church confesses:

- 1. The _____ Creed*
- 2. The _____ Creed*
- 3. The _____ Creed*

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Athanasian Creed

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all else, hold to the true Christian faith. Whoever does not keep this faith pure in all points will certainly perish forever.

Now this is the true Christian faith: We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being.

For each person--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--is distinct, but the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

What the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal; yet they are not three who are eternal, but there is one who is eternal, just as they are not three who are uncreated, nor three who are infinite, but there is one who is uncreated and one who is infinite.

In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty; yet they are not three who are almighty, but there is one who is almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually to be God and Lord, so the true Christian faith forbids us to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is neither made nor created nor begotten of anyone. The Son is neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is neither made nor created nor

begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior, but all three persons are coequal and coeternal, so that in every way, as stated before, all three persons are to be worshiped as one God and one God worshiped as three persons.

Whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity.

It is furthermore necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh.

Now this is the true Christian faith: We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man. He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal

to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity; and though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one, one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; one, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person; for just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there will come to judge the living and the dead.

At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies to answer for their personal deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, but those who have done evil will go into eternal fire.

This is the true Christian faith. Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.

What is the history of the Lutheran Church?

The Lutheran Church is named after _____, who lived in _____ from _____ to _____.

By studying the _____, Luther learned that the _____ was teaching many false teachings, such as that we are saved by _____ and not by _____, and that _____ rules are on an equal footing with _____, and many others.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the _____ to the church door, questioning some of the false teachings of the church.

His goal was to _____ the church so that it taught correctly, but when they did not listen—and instead excommunicated him—he and his followers began the church known as the Lutheran Church.

We call ourselves Lutherans not because we _____ Luther, but because we _____ what the _____ says, just like Luther.

The Lutheran Church has written creeds, which are called the _____, as a further statement of the Scriptural teaching we believe. These include:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Together, all of these are compiled with the Creeds into the Book of _____.

Who is the Antichrist?

Dear children, it is the last hour. The Antichrist is coming, just as you have heard, and even now many antichrists have come. (This is how you know that it is the last hour.) They went out from us, but they really were not part of us. If they had been part of us, they would have stayed with us. Instead they all showed that they were not part of us. (1 John 2:18-19)

Let no one deceive you in any way, because that day will not come until the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed—the son of destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above everyone who is called God or every object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, displaying himself as God.

In fact, the mystery of this lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who is now holding him back moves out of the way. Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy when he appears in splendor at his coming.

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan, with every kind of miracle, that is, with false signs and wonders, and with every kind of unrighteousness that deceives those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. And because of this, God continues to send them a strong delusion, so that they believe the lie, in order that all those may be condemned who refused to believe the truth but instead delighted in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,7-12)

One specific false teacher to watch out for is the _____, or the Man of _____.

The Antichrist...

1. *Sets himself up in the _____.*
2. *Claims to speak for _____.*
3. *Promotes a _____.*

The Antichrist is the _____. He...

1. *Has set himself up as the supreme leader in the _____ and says you must be subject to him to be _____.*
2. *Claims that when he speaks, this is _____ speaking.*
3. *He promotes many lies, including that we are saved by _____.*

The Antichrist is overthrown by the _____, and finally destroyed when Jesus _____.