

Glossary of Worship Words

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Absolution: Forgiveness of sins - especially the word of forgiveness spoken to a person who confesses sin and wants to be forgiven.

Agnostic: A person who claims that we cannot know for sure whether there is a God or not, and so cannot know anything certain about God.

Apostle: Literally means 'messengers'. Spirits created by God who serve him as messengers, especially by protecting his people. Literally means: one who is sent, a messenger. Jesus' specially-chosen disciples were called apostles.

Ascension: Forty days after Jesus rose from death, he ascended into heaven; he has gone back to his Father to prepare a place for his followers. Jesus now 'sits at the right hand of the Father': he rules together with his Father.

Atheist: A person who believes that there is no God.

Atonement: By his death, Jesus atoned or made up for our sins. He paid the penalty for us.

Baptism: The Sacrament set up by Jesus. To baptise means to apply water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for forgiveness and salvation.

Bible: Literally means: book. Also called Holy Scripture (= holy writing). A library of 66 books written over a period of approximately 1500 years by men whom God inspired.

Bless: To bless a person means to pronounce God's favour on someone, resulting in happiness and prosperity. To bless God means to adore God and say how good he is.

The Blessing: At the conclusion of the worship service the pastor makes a pronouncement, assuring people that God will go with them, guard them, help them and give them his peace.

Born again: Everyone who believes in Jesus and is baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is 're-born' as a child of God, begins a new life as a new person, with a new nature. The Holy Spirit works this miracle through the Gospel (good news) of Jesus.

Catechism: A book of instruction using questions and answers. Martin Luther wrote two catechisms (the *Small Catechism* and the *Large Catechism*). These are accepted by Lutherans as correct statements of their teaching, based on the Bible.

Catholic: Literally means: universal, or world-wide. Lutherans believe in 'the holy catholic Church'. The phrase 'the holy Christian Church' is used in the Creed to avoid confusion with the Roman Catholic Church.

Christ: Jesus' title. Literally means: the anointed one, one set apart for a special task ('Messiah' in the Old Testament). Jesus was anointed to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Collect: A prayer which 'collects' the thoughts of the day.

Communion/ communicant: A communicant is a person who receives Communion (or Holy Communion).

First Communion: Usually, children receive Communion for the first time when they are confirmed. However, some Lutheran churches admit children to Communion before they are confirmed, but after they indicate their wish to commune and have received proper instruction.

Confession: (a) Admitting our sin. We confess our sins publicly in the church service. We may also privately confess to a pastor or other fellow-Christian particular sins that are on our conscience.
(b) A statement of beliefs and teachings. The Lutheran 'Confessions' were written at the time of the Reformation. They are accepted by most Lutherans as correct explanations of the teachings of the Bible. The main confessions are: the Augsburg Confession; Luther's Small Catechism; Luther's Large Catechism.

Confirmation: A church ceremony in which people who have been instructed in the Christian/Lutheran faith publicly confess their faith and their intention to continue in the faith. Usually they receive Holy Communion for the first time when they are confirmed.

Congregation: A local gathering of Christians who come together for worship. In the Lutheran Church, each congregation has the authority to make its own decisions, but is encouraged to bear in mind the welfare of the Church as a whole.

Conscience: An inner sense of right and wrong. Since the Fall into sin, the human conscience is unreliable unless it is guided by the Word of God.

Conversion: To be converted means to be turned from unbelief to faith. We can't convert ourselves by making our own 'decision for Christ'. It is the Holy Spirit who converts people by leading them to faith in Jesus as their Saviour.

Covenant: A treaty, pact, or contract. In the Bible, the term refers to an agreement God makes with people promising to be their God and to bless them.

Creation: To create means to bring into existence to make out of nothing.

Creed: A statement of belief. The three 'ecumenical' (accepted by the major Christian churches) creeds are: The Apostles' Creed; The Nicene Creed; The Athanasian Creed. The creeds are used in Lutheran church services as common statements of faith.

Death: Separation. Physical death is separation from the body. Spiritual death is separation from God in this life. Eternal death is the never-ending separation from God in hell.

Denomination: A group of Christians and/or congregations which has specific beliefs, teachings, and practices.

Devil: The enemy of God, of human beings, and of all that is good. Also called Satan. Originally a holy angel, the devil rebelled against God and was banished to hell (2 Peter 2:4). The devil is the 'tempter' who tries to lead us into sin.

Disciple: A follower of Jesus. Every Christian is a disciple (= learner), who is called to follow Jesus and to learn from him.

Discipline: If a member of a congregation falls into some sin, and it is obvious that he/she does not repent, it is the duty of the other members lovingly to warn and correct that person. This is called 'church discipline' (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1).

Doctrine: A teaching of the Bible, or of a denomination (for example, the doctrine of Creation).

Doxology: A song of praise to God.

Elders: In the Lutheran Church, elders are laymen elected by a congregation to help the pastor(s) care for the members of the congregation.

Eschatology: The Bible's teachings about the last things (the end of the world, Jesus' second coming, etc.).

Eternal: Timeless, never-ending. God is eternal - without beginning or end. All who believe in Jesus as their Saviour have God's free gift of eternal life with him.

Evangelism: Evangel means Gospel, the good news of Jesus. Evangelism is communicating the good news of Jesus, especially to people who are not Christians.

Excommunication: The excluding from a congregation of a person who obviously will not repent of some sin, even though he/she has been urged to do so (as Jesus directed in Matthew 18:15-18; see Discipline above). A congregation takes this step only as a last resort in the attempt to lead the person to turn away from sin and to receive God's forgiveness.

Faith: (a) Belief or trust - especially putting our confidence or trust in Jesus as our only Saviour. Faith is not a decision we make by our own willpower; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit.
(b) Faith can also mean a set of beliefs, what is believed and taught in the Church. (e.g., We have learnt the Christian 'faith' from this book.)

Fall: When the first human beings disobeyed God, they 'fell' from the perfect state in which God had created them. The Fall into sin ruined God's whole creation. Our sinful nature is a product of the Fall.

Fellowship: Christian fellowship means belonging to the family of God with other Christians, and enjoying oneness in Christ.

Flesh: The term often used in the Bible for the sinful human nature with which we are born.

Forgiveness: To forgive means to let someone go free of the guilt and punishment he/she has deserved, not to hold against a person the wrong he/she has done. Jesus won God's forgiveness for all people; everyone who believes in him has the forgiveness of all sins.

Freedom/Liberty: Christians have been set free by Jesus from the demands of God's Law, from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin. We have been set free to be God's holy people; we are free to gladly serve him and other people. 'Christian liberty' also means that we are free to make our own decisions in all matters where God has given us no specific instructions (cf Romans 14:1,8; Galatians 5:1).

Gentiles: In the Old Testament, all nations apart from God's chosen people, Israel, were called Gentiles. The word is sometimes widened to mean unbelievers.

The Gloria: (Glory to God in the Highest): A hymn of praise sung to God. It begins with the angel's song at the time of Jesus' birth. Here people proclaim God's grace in sending Jesus.

Gospel: (a) The main truth of the Bible. The good news that God loves all people despite their sin; that Jesus is the Saviour of all because he gave his life for all; and that all who believe in Jesus have the free gift of everlasting life. (b) The first four books of the New Testament are called gospels because they recount the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus our Saviour.

Grace: The undeserved love of God for us. God accepts and forgives sinners 'by grace', moved by his own love.

The Greeting: Where worshippers greet each other, asking God to bless them as his Word is read and proclaimed.

Heaven: Where God is. Because heaven is beyond our dimensions of time and space, the Bible often uses picture-language to describe it (e.g., a city of gold). To be in heaven means to be with God.

Hell: The opposite of heaven. The state of never-ending separation from God. The Bible uses the picture of 'hell-fire' to describe the agony of being cut off from God.

Holy: Separate or set apart. God is 'holy' because he is set apart from all other beings as the perfect, sinless One. Christians are holy in God's sight because Jesus has taken their sin on himself.

Holy Communion: One of God's means of grace. Other names are: The Sacrament of the Altar; The Lord's Supper; The Eucharist (= Thanksgiving); The Lord's Table. 'Communion' means fellowship, belonging together sharing together.

The Holy Spirit: The Third Person in the Holy Trinity, true God, together with the Father and the Son. The Spirit's special work is to make people holy by bringing them to faith in Jesus and giving them new life as God's children. After people become Christians, the Holy Spirit maintains and strengthens faith through the means of grace.

Idolatry: Having a false god. We commit idolatry if we fear, love, and trust anyone or anything more than God (see the First Commandment).

Image of God: God made human beings holy and immortal like himself (Genesis 1:26); they fell from this original condition when they sinned. The Holy Spirit re-creates people in God's image when he brings them to faith in Jesus (Ephesians 4:24). The image of God also includes mankind's ability to reason, to make decisions of right and wrong, and to relate to God through worship.

Incarnation: Literally means: becoming flesh. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, became a true human being when he was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is 'God incarnate', God and man in one person.

Inherited Sin (original sin): The sin passed on from sinful parents to their children. Since the Fall into sin, all human beings are born with inherited sin, and need God's grace.

Inspiration: To inspire means to breathe into. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write down God's Word in the Bible.

Intercession: A form of prayer. To intercede means to pray for someone else.

Jesus: Means 'Saviour'.

Judgment: God is the supreme Judge of all people. All people deserve to be found guilty under God's judgment, but God put Jesus on trial instead of us. Since Jesus was found guilty and sentenced to death for us, all who believe in Jesus have already survived God's judgment.

Judgment Day: The final judgment at the end of the world, when God's judgment on all people will be pronounced according to their response to God's grace.

Justification: To justify means to declare not guilty. God pronounces all believers in Jesus to be not guilty of their sin (See also Judgment above).

Keys (Office of the Keys): The power Jesus has given his followers to open or close heaven to people by forgiving or retaining (not forgiving) their sins.

Kingdom of God: God's rule over people as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. God rules not only with power and majesty, but also especially with his grace. He sets up his rule over people through the Gospel of Jesus (including the Sacraments), by which the Holy Spirit works trust in God and his grace.

The Kyrie: The 'Lord, have mercy' which is usually spoken or sung 3 times. There is recognition of the almighty God coming to people in worship and the plea for help in need.

The Lamb of God (Agnus Dei): The people's response of faith is a simple prayer to Christ, the lamb of God, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Straight afterwards people come to the altar. With the bread and wine they receive Christ's true body and blood 'given and shed for the forgiveness of sins'.

Law: One of the main teachings of the Bible. Tells us what God demands, and threatens to punish disobedience. The Law always condemns us because we can't obey it. But Jesus obeyed the law for us, and paid for our lawbreaking on the cross. All who trust Jesus are free from the Law's demands and threats.

Layman/laywoman/ layperson/laity: A lay person is a member of the Church who is not a clergyman. In some churches, 'lay workers' are employed for particular ministry duties. Lutherans use lay readers, but usually not lay preachers.

The Lessons (or readings): Bible readings from the Old Testament, the letters in the New Testament, and the Gospels. During the Gospel reading, people usually stand as a mark of respect.

Liturgy: A form of public worship. The Lutheran Church is 'liturgical'; it uses a set order of service rather than 'free' forms of worship. Lutheran liturgies usually draw on traditions passed down over many centuries.

The Lord's Prayer: A prayer given by Jesus (Matthew 6:9-13) which is a summary of the blessings people seek from God.

Lutheran: Originally a nickname given to followers of Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer. 'Lutherans' share Martin Luther's understanding of the main teachings of the Bible.

Means of Grace: The 'channels' the Holy Spirit uses to bring us God's love: the Word of God and the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion).

Mercy: Pity, sympathy, kindness toward people who have not deserved it. God is merciful to us, and tells us to be merciful to others.

Messiah: Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name Christ.

Ministry: Literally means: service. All Christians are called to minister by serving God and other people in their daily work and with their talents. The **Office of the (Public) Ministry** is the specific work of publicly preaching and teaching God's Word to which pastors are called. An alternative title for pastors is ministers (= servants).

Mission: Literally means: sending. Jesus sends all his followers out to their own community and nation, and then to all nations, as 'missionaries of the Gospel'. The term 'missionary' is usually applied to professional Christian workers sent by the Church to work among non-Christians.

Neighbour: Every other human being, especially those who need our help.

New Testament: (a) The 27 books of the Bible written since the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
(b) The term is also used to describe God's grace and forgiveness for all people through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. In Holy Communion, Christ gives us his blood of the new testament [covenant].

Offence: In the biblical sense, anything which causes someone to stumble spiritually.

Offertory (or offering): An opportunity for people to make thank offerings to God and to dedicate themselves to him in response to God's message.

Ordination: The church ceremony by which qualified persons are publicly declared to be ministers of Christ authorised to preach, baptise, and administer Holy Communion.

Original Sin: See Inherited Sin above.

Parables: Stories from nature and life which Jesus told to teach people about God and his rule.

Passion: The 'Passion of our Lord' means the suffering of Jesus leading up to and including his death on the cross of our Saviour.

Pastor: Literally means: shepherd. The title given by Lutherans to a person called by a congregation to 'feed and lead' its members by carrying out the Office of the Ministry.

The Prayer of the Church: A prayer for the whole church and all people, but also includes special requests for individual needs.

Propers: The parts of the worship service that change from Sunday to Sunday to stress the main theme of worship for that day.

Prophet: A person whom God called and inspired to speak his divine word of judgment and/or promise. This sometimes included predicting future events.

Propitiation: See Atonement above.

Providence: God our Father's care for his creation. He provides us with what we need. He makes all things work for good for his children.

Real Presence: In Holy Communion, the body and blood of Jesus are actually present with the bread and wine. All communicants receive Christ's true body, given into death, and Christ's true blood, shed on the cross for sin.

Reconciliation: The removal of the barrier between God and human beings caused by sin. We are reconciled to God when faith grasps the forgiveness earned by Christ on the cross. Christians living in that forgiveness then work for reconciliation between people.

Redemption: God's act of buying back sinful humanity. Jesus bought us back from sin, death, and the power of the devil; it cost him his life to redeem us.

Reformation: The movement in the 16th century to correct unbiblical teaching and practice in the church of that day. Martin Luther was the leading reformer.

Regeneration: Re-birth and the gift of spiritual life. See Born Again and Conversion above.

Renewal: Being made new again. The Holy Spirit makes people new when he brings them to faith in Christ (for example, through Baptism). He renews us again and again by calling us to repentance, stronger faith, and God-pleasing living. Through God's Word and Sacraments, he helps us 'put off' the old nature and 'put on' the new nature.

Repentance: The change of heart brought about by the Holy Spirit through God's word. It includes both turning away from sin and turning in faith to God for forgiveness.

Resurrection: God's act of bringing back to life again those who have died. Jesus' resurrection has made it certain that all believers will be raised from death on the Last Day to enjoy eternal life with Christ.

Revelation: To reveal means to make known. God has revealed himself in various ways, especially through the Bible (God's written revelation) and through Jesus Christ (the Word incarnate). (See ch 3, and Word of God below.)

Righteousness: To be righteous means to be right, good, innocent. God is righteous, and expects us to be righteous, too. Righteousness- being right with God - comes not by our performance or achievements, but only by faith in Jesus. Because Jesus took our place, God credits Jesus' righteousness to all who trust in him. See Justification above.

Right Hand of God: God's action in carrying out his purposes. The risen and ascended Jesus 'sits at God's right hand': rules over all things for the good of his Church.

Sacred: Holy, set apart for God.

Sacrament: The Lutheran Church defines a sacrament as a holy act commanded by God, in which earthly elements are used with God's Word to pass on to us God's grace and blessing. Christ gave us two sacraments: Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion.

Saint: Holy person. All who believe in Jesus as their Saviour are saints, or holy people, because they have the forgiveness of their sins.

Salvation: Being saved (made safe) from sin and its consequences. The work Jesus did for us as our *Saviour*. Sometimes it refers to our final deliverance when we are 'safe and sound' in heaven for ever. Salvation is God's free gift, which he offers to us through his Word and Sacraments.

Sanctification: To sanctify means to make separate, to make holy. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us by making our lives holy. While we become God's children in the instant we come to faith in Jesus, our growing in holiness is an ongoing process. We will reach perfection only in heaven.

The Sanctus (Holy Holy Holy): The lead-in to the Sacrament of the Altar, spoken or sung sentences of joy and thanksgiving.

Saviour: One who saves, rescues, delivers. The name Jesus means Saviour. He has saved or rescued people from sin death, hell, and the power of the devil.

Scripture: See **Bible** above.

Second Coming: Jesus' return in glory for the final judgment at the end of the world. No one knows the date of the Second Coming. The Bible urges us to be ready for it all the time.

The Sermon: God serves his people through his Word as preached by the pastor. The sermon aims to build faith and provide motivation for daily living.

Sin: Anything that separates us from God. It includes the evil nature which we inherit, and our breaking God's Law by doing what we shouldn't, or not doing what we should. Other words for sin are: trespass, transgression, lawlessness, debt.

The Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis): Throughout the worship service, Jesus comes to people with the assurance of forgiveness, peace, and his presence. The service closes with the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32; or another post-communion song), followed by the sentences and prayer of thanksgiving.

Soul: The non-physical part of a person; the essence of the life God gave to human beings.

Sponsors: Godparents. Persons who make themselves responsible for infants presented for Baptism. Sponsors witness the baptism, pray for the child, and assist parents in the Christian upbringing of the child.

Stewardship: In the Bible, a steward is a manager, caretaker, or trustee. We belong to God with all we are and have - our time, abilities, money, possessions, etc. Moved by God's grace toward us, we want to serve him with everything he has entrusted to us.

Temptation: To tempt means to put to the test. God uses times of testing to bring or keep us close to him. The devil, the world (people opposed to God), and our own sinful flesh try to lead us away from God.

Theology: The study of God and of his revelation to humankind; a set of teachings about God.

Trinity/Triune: Church terms to describe the truth that the true God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - three distinct Persons in one God. The term does not occur in the Bible, but is supported by many Scripture passages.

Virgin Birth: The Bible teaching that Jesus' mother, Mary, was a virgin. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit's power not by human sexual union.

Will of God: what God wants to do for us - especially his desire to save us. Also what God wants us to do, and to experience. In situations where we do not know exactly what God wants for us, we pray: 'If it is your will, Lord'.

Word of God: God's revealing of himself to human beings. In John 1, Jesus is called the Word (of God) because he revealed God's grace and truth to us in his incarnation. The Bible is also called the Word of God because it is God's message to us through inspired human writers.

Words of Institution: Jesus' words (from the Last Supper, Matthew 26:26-28) used with the bread and wine, makes this sacrament a 'means of grace'.

Worship: A public or private act by which God comes to us with his grace through Word and Sacraments, and we respond in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.