



The Preview

A Special Edition

Lutherans in America

An Overview of Lutheran Denominations in the United States

Prior to the second vote on our relationship with the ELCA, we need to decide which Lutheran denomination to join. This decision is required in order to retain our property. Twelve criteria have been identified to assist the discernment process. They are listed below, and in the remainder of this document you will find them included along with brief descriptions of the various Lutheran denominations in the United States. We have only included denominations with 40 congregations or more. The format is set up for ease of comparison. It should be noted that the size of denominations are somewhat fluid, as recent events will lead to only estimates on the size of groups such as CORE and LCMC. Not all Lutheran bodies have extensive information available. Only the information provided on websites or easily gleaned from other resources is listed. A table condensing this information is provided at the end of the individual denomination information sheets.

Comparative information for each Lutheran denomination is listed in the following format:

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- *Interpretation of Scripture*
- *Social Statements*
- *Role of Women*
- *Communion Practices*

POLITY

- *Degree of congregational autonomy*
- *Organizational structure*
- *Liturgical parameters*
- *Ordination*

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- *Size of the denomination*
- *Proximity of congregations*
- *Pastoral Resources*
- *Ethos*

Lutheran Denominations

The list below includes 29 Lutheran denominations in the United States. Many of these denominations are small with only a few congregations. Those congregations (shown in bold face and italic print have more detailed information included on the pages that follow. We urge you to conduct your own study of the various possibilities for Richland Lutheran Church. All but one denomination have a website with more information. The denominations appear in alphabetical order. Lutheran CORE is listed at the end, as it is a network as opposed to a denomination.

1. ***(The) American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC or TAALC)*** <http://www.taalc.org>
2. Association of Confessional Lutheran Churches (ACLCh) <http://reformationchurch.org>
3. ***Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (ALCA)*** <http://www.apostoliclutheran.org>
4. ***Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC)*** <http://www.aflc.org>
5. Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC) <http://www.allianceofrenewalchurches.org>
6. Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church (ALCC) <http://www.anglolutherancatholic.org>
7. Conservative Lutheran Association (CLA) <http://www.centrallutheranchurch.com>
8. ***Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLBA)*** <http://www.clba.org>
9. ***Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC)*** <http://clclutheran.org>
10. Concordia Lutheran Conference (CLC) <http://www.concordialutheranconf.com>
11. Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) <http://www.elca.org>
12. Evangelical Lutheran Conference & Ministerium (ELCM) <http://www.elcm.org>
13. Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (ELDoNA) <http://www.eldona.org>
14. ***Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)*** <http://www.evangelicallutheransynod.org>
15. ***Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC)*** <http://lutheranepc.com>
16. Illinois Lutheran Conference (ILC) <http://www.illinoislutheranconference.org>
17. International Lutheran Fellowship (ILF) <http://ilf-lutheran.org>
18. Laestadian Lutheran Church (LLC) <http://www.laestadianlutheran.org>
19. Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LELCA) No official website
20. Lutheran Conference on Confessional Fellowship (LCCF) <http://lutheranlccf.org>
21. ***Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)*** <http://www.lcmc.net>
22. ***Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)*** <http://www.lcms.org>
23. Lutheran Ministerium and Synod – USA (LMS-USA) <http://www.lmsusa.org>
24. Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) <http://www.lcrusa.org>
25. Orthodox Lutheran Confessional Conference (OLCC) <http://olcc.us>
26. Protes'ant Conference <http://www.protestantconf.org>
27. United Lutheran Mission Association (ULMA) <http://www.unitedlutheranmission.org>
28. ***Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)*** <http://www.wels.net>
29. ***Coalition of Renewal (CORE)*** <http://www.lutherancore.org>

Highlights of Selected Lutheran Bodies

The information included in these summaries was obtained from the websites of each denomination. The criteria is the same for each, though not all sites included the same information, or we were unable to find it. If in your own research, you are able to fill in some blanks, please let us know so more complete information can be available to all. There is no significance to the order in which the denominations appear other than alphabetical as on the previous page.

(The) American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC or TAALC)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** At its beginning, TAALC defined itself by its opposition to the theology of the ELCA, and became a home to orthodox, evangelical, and charismatic Lutherans.
- **Social Statements:** The AALC congregations, in Convention, have adopted theological positions on The Sanctity of Life, About Homosexuality, and The Union of Marriage. As needs arise, the AALC congregations in Convention may issue further statements about the AALC position on social issues.
- **Role of Women:** Our position is that from a scriptural and confessional standpoint, the pastoral office is restricted to men. While we do not ordain women as pastors, women may serve on the council or as voting delegates.
- **Communion Practices:** We practice "responsible communion" which is neither open nor closed. That is, according to the Bible, we have a responsibility to tell people what we believe

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Locally, each congregation can determine how it desires to govern itself. Because the AALC is a voluntary association, it depends entirely on voluntary contributions from churches and individuals.
- **Organizational structure:** Nationally, AALC has the Joint Council which functions as the oversight board between National Conventions.
- **Liturgical parameters:** Very broad range, though often non-liturgical
- **Ordination:** Only men are ordained

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 78 congregations
- **Proximity of congregations:** Present in 23 states (as of 2007), 2 congregations in Washington, 1 in Oregon, 0 in Idaho
- **Pastoral resources:** The AALC operates its own seminary: The American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS). In the fall of 2005, ALTS relocated to Fort Wayne, IN and is hosted by Concordia Theological Seminary of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS). Call: Churches without a pastor or those who would like to add to their staff contact the National Office. The National Office provides a call list of three to five qualified and certified pastors from the AALC clergy roster. The church is then free to interview each man as they choose and issue a call to the one they select.
- **Ethos:** AALC continues in the proud conservative ALC tradition to offer a viable alternative to Lutheran congregations across America.

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (ALCA)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** ALCA accepts the creeds of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and puts emphasis on

the necessity of regeneration and the practical importance of absolution from sin. The majority of the doctrine within the Apostolic Lutheran Faith is based on *Luther's Small Catechism*, a collection of Martin Luther's teachings.

- **Social Statements:** Not stated or not apparent
- **Role of Women:** May vote, but may not preach or serve in leadership
- **Communion Practices:** For confirmed members

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Individual member churches are governed by elected boards.
- **Organizational structure:** ALCA has no central headquarters facility and 10 national board members. The national organization is governed by an elected board (the Central Board) which meets regularly at various locations across the United States and Canada.
- **Liturgical parameters:** Simple, non-liturgical, often with Finnish hymns
- **Ordination:** Apostolic Succession; only men are ordained; educational standards unknown

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 56 congregations
- **Proximity of congregations:** Majority in Upper Midwest (32) and Northwest (10)
- **Pastoral resources:** Not stated or not apparent
- **Ethos:** Lutheran church established by Finnish-Americans in the early 20th century. The ALCA does not hold exclusive views, such as being only true church.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** We accept and believe in the Holy Bible as the complete written Word of God, preserved to us by the Holy Spirit for our salvation and instruction. We endorse the statement on the Word as found in the United Testimony on Faith and Life and would quote here the following: We bear witness that the Bible is our only authentic and infallible source of God's revelation to us and all men, and that it is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of Christian doctrine and life.
- **Social Statements:** Biblical citations on 30 topics, nine documents
- **Role of Women:** Women not ordained
- **Communion Practices:** For confirmed members

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** The congregation directs its own affairs. Each local congregation is a separate corporation.
- **Organizational structure:** The AFLC is not an incorporated synod, but a free association.
- **Liturgical parameters:** We make no recommendation as to the use of liturgy and vestments except that we encourage simplicity in worship.
- **Ordination:** Only men are ordained; seminary/training

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 275 congregations in 25 different states, as well as four Canadian provinces: fourth largest Lutheran church body in the United States
- **Proximity of congregations:** 8 Congregations in WA, 3 in OR
- **Pastoral resources:** Not stated or not apparent

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- **Ethos:** It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse.

Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLBA)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** In addition to the denominational statement of faith, the church adheres to the following historic confessions: the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and *Luther's Small Catechism*.
- **Social Statements:** Statement affirming traditional view of marriage
- **Role of Women:** We do not ordain women, so therefore they may not serve in the pastor or elder offices. In most of our congregations they are free to serve in all other positions.
- **Communion Practices:** For confirmed members

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** The local congregation is autonomous.
- **Organizational structure:** The synodical administration exists to serve the congregations in helping congregations fulfill the great commission.
- **Liturgical parameters:** Non-liturgical worship and a church composed only of confessing Christians differentiates it from most Lutherans in America. Within our congregations we have a variety of worship formats. Some are fully contemporary while some are fully traditional. Most are a blend.
- **Ordination:** Lutheran Brethren Seminary (Fergus Falls, MN)

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 8907 members in 116 congregations
- **Proximity of congregations:** 16 congregations in northwest
- **Pastoral Resources:** We have 185 active Ordained and Licensed pastors. 47 retired pastors (2007). A pension plan and also a health plan. The Synodical Office of President as well as District Presidents will work with congregations in finding candidates and assist as needed.
- **Ethos:** Its strong emphasis on missions and evangelism, its stand for non-liturgical worship and a church composed only of confessing Christians differentiates it from most Lutherans in America. The CLBA considers itself to be "Lutheran in theological tradition and evangelical in practice."

The Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** All of the CLC member churches confess that the Bible is the inspired and unerring Word of God. We repudiate unionism, that is, church-fellowship with adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command.
- **Social Statements:** On most conservative side of Lutheran spectrum
- **Role of Women:** Does not permit ordaining or holding official roles in congregation
- **Communion Practices:** Closed

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Autonomy lies with congregation
- **Organizational structure:** Regularly meeting affiliation of congregations

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- **Liturgical parameters:** Not stated or not apparent
 - **Ordination:** Only men are ordained

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 8,000 members, 75 churches in 24 states
- **Proximity of congregations:** 3 congregations in WA and 1 in ID
- **Pastoral Resources:** Immanuel Lutheran Seminary (Eau Claire, WI)
- **Ethos:** The orthodox character of a church is established by its outward acceptance and subscription to an orthodox creed

Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** A doctrinal statement was adopted in June, 1992. It is not intended to replace the Book of Concord or even one of the confessions therein, nor is it to be understood as constituting a thorough presentation of our beliefs and practices; rather, it is to serve as an up-to-date statement that can quickly inform interested persons of the Scriptural and confessional position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod on important matters.
- **Social Statements:** We confess that Scripture condemns homosexuality and extra-marital relations (fornication and adultery) as sin. According to God's design, a man and a woman may enjoy a life-long companionship in mutual love. We confess that Scripture upholds the sanctity of human life.
- **Role of Women:** Not ordained. Able to assist but not hold leadership positions in the congregation ("serve on committees in advisory capacities").
- **Communion Practices:** Closed

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Limited
- **Organizational structure:** Synod hierarchy: As each new congregation is accepted into membership in the synod, the synod secretary shall assign it to one of the circuits of the synod.
- **Liturgical parameters:** Not stated or not apparent
- **Ordination:** Bethany Lutheran College, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 142 congregations spread across US
- **Proximity of congregations:** Large concentration in upper midwest, 11 congregations in WA and OR.
- **Pastoral Resources:** Bethany Lutheran College, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
- **Ethos:** Norwegian Synod

The Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** We unashamedly believe in God the Father; Jesus Christ, His Son, as our Lord and Savior; the Holy Spirit as our Comforter and Guide; and, the authority of Holy Scripture in matters of faith and practice. We stand firmly for Biblical morality. "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

- **Social Statements:** Homosexuality: The Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church follows the Bible in all matters of faith including the issue of homosexuality. Marriage: Marriage is the union of a man and a woman. Abortion: Abortion is the willful taking of innocent human life.
- **Role of Women:** Ordination into Christian service is for men and woman who have experienced salvation through faith in Christ Jesus and who are baptized believers called by Christ through the Holy Spirit to serve Him in ministry. Men and women may serve as deacons, overseers, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists as examples of all of these can be found in scripture concerning both male and female
- **Communion Practices:** Open, all believers are welcome to partake at the Lord's Table.

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Limited
- **Organizational structure:** We have a Board of Governors for the nonprofit corporation. The Presiding Bishop serves as president of this corporation. We have an Executive Board that handles the everyday administrative affairs of the Community, a Board of Advisors and a Council of Bishops. The Presiding Bishop is the chief Executive Officer and chief under shepherd under the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. We have regional/synod bishops. **Liturgical parameters:** We have a broad spectrum of worship; some high church, some low church, traditional, some contemporary depending on the locale and culture of those being served. The various Lutheran books of worship may be used according to ministerial or congregational preference.
- **Ordination:** Required for members in LEPC; Concordia Theologica: official Training Institute for The General Conference of Evangelical Protestant Churches (GCEPC), LEPC and EPC

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 44 congregations in many states in the U.S but not all. Churches/ministries in Spain, Nigeria, Canada, Kenya, The Congo, Algeria, and Trinidad.
- **Proximity of congregations:** Unknown – based in South Carolina
- **Pastoral Resources:** Concordia Theologica: official Training Institute for The General Conference of Evangelical Protestant Churches(GCEPC), LEPC and EPC
- **Ethos:** The vision for the LEPC came in 1999 as an answer to rising demand among some Lutherans for a conservative and biblical approach to their faith.

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- **Social Statements:** The LCMC does not make official social statements, though it has made a pastoral statement affirming the traditional view of marriage
- **Role of Women:** Full role of women including ordination
- **Communion Practices:** Open

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** LCMC is congregational in structure, rejecting the historic episcopate adopted by the ELCA, the denomination which most LCMC members were once a part of.
- **Organizational structure:** An association of Lutheran congregations
- **Liturgical parameters:** Very broad
- **Ordination:** Working relationship with 4 seminaries, Bethel Seminary (MN), Sioux Falls Seminary (formerly North

American Baptist Seminary) (SD), The Master's Institute Seminary (MN), Institute of Lutheran Theology (SD)

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 284 congregations
- **Proximity of congregations:** 11 in Northwest
- **Pastoral Resources:** Open call process. Listing of clergy seeking call (~ 40 names)
- **Ethos:** Mission oriented

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** Inspired and inerrant Word of god
- **Social Statements:** Traditional views of marriage, homosexual behavior, abortion, as well as many other topics
- **Role of Women:** Ordination of women as clergy is contrary to scripture. Now in many congregations of the LCMS, women now serve as congregation president or chairperson, or Elders, etc. This is the cause of contention within the LCMS with some congregations utilizing women in public worship to read lessons, and assist in the distribution of Holy Communion.
- **Communion Practices:** close or closed communion

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** moderate
- **Organizational structure:** Highly organized national structure with 35 districts, ~ 650 "circuits" distributed under the districts with 7-20 congregations per circuit
- **Liturgical parameters:** worship in Missouri Synod congregations is orthodox and liturgical, utilizing a printed order of service and hymnal, accompanied by a pipe organ or other classical instrumentation. In recent years, some congregations have adopted a variety of less-formal worship styles, employing contemporary Christian music, pianos, guitars, and other instruments in a folk mass or rock band setting. This has caused a great deal of contention in the church body since it has a decidedly liturgical heritage.
- **Ordination:** Seminary education. Only men are ordained.

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 2.4 million baptized members, over 6,000 congregations, approximately half of whom are located in the upper midwest, second-largest Lutheran body in the U.S. after the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- **Proximity of congregations:** 125 in WA alone
- **Pastoral Resources:** 2 seminaries, 9,700 ordained
- **Ethos:** Strives toward uniformity in practice, while also encouraging responsible and doctrinally-sound diversity.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** The Wisconsin Synod subscribes to the Lutheran Reformation teaching of Sola-scriptura—"Scripture alone." It holds that the Bible is the only standard by which church teachings can be judged.
- **Social Statements:** WELS teaches that extramarital sex and homosexual relations are sin
- **Role of Women:** Scriptures reserve the pastoral office for men. Women may participate in offices and activities of the public ministry except where that work involves authority over men.

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- **Communion Practices:** Closed

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** limited
- **Organizational structure:** The synod in convention is the legislative body that determines the direction the organization should head to fulfill its mission of making disciples throughout the world
- **Liturgical parameters:** *Generally liturgical*
- **Ordination:** Training through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** Over 398,000 in more than 1,200 congregations in all 50 U.S. states and 4 provinces of Canada. It is the third largest Lutheran denomination in the United States
- **Proximity of congregations:** National/international
- **Pastoral Resources:** Training through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
- **Ethos:** Conservative

Coalition for Renewal (CORE)

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

- **Interpretation of Scripture:** Since the inception of the ELCA, there has been concern that the ELCA was moving away from the traditional Lutheran Confessions and adherence to scripture.
- **Social Statements**
- **Role of Women:** Full ordination and participation
- **Communion Practices:** Open

POLITY

- **Degree of congregational autonomy:** Explore possibilities for the future of Lutheran CORE, including relationships with other reform movements
- **Organizational structure:** Voted to create "a free-standing synod for all faithful Lutherans" and to work with "other compatible churchly organizations leading toward a possible reconfiguration of North American Lutheranism
- **Liturgical parameters:** Similar to ELCA
- **Ordination:** Explore the possibility of a deepening relationship with an already-existing seminary. Sponsor theological conferences on Scripture, theology, and the Confessions. Develop a plan for continuing education for pastors, lay ministers and lay people

PRACTICAL CRITERIA

- **Size of the denomination:** 1,200 delegates at the CORE national convocation
- **Proximity of congregations:** None locally; 4 in WA
- **Pastoral Resources:** Consider a plan for mentoring seminarians and newly ordained pastors. Utilize the contribution of the WordAlone Institute. Utilize the contribution of the WordAlone calling process
- **Ethos:** Not stated or not apparent

Lutherans in America

Church Body	# of Members	# of Congregations	History	Beliefs
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) www.lcms.org	2.6 million	6,075	1847: German background	Confessional Lutheran
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) www.wels.net	380,000	1,200 in U.S. & 24 countries	1850: German background	Confessional Lutheran Biblical inerrancy
Association of Free Lutheran Churches (AFLC) www.aflc.org		275 in 25 states	1962: 40 Lutheran Free Church- who did not wish to join the ALC	Biblical inerrancy Priesthood of believers
Lutheran Congregations In Mission for Christ (LCMC) www.lcmc.net		284 (236 in U.S. & 48 in other countries)	2000: Started by Word Alone as an alternative for churches who felt they could no longer remain in the ELCA; 31 congregations	Confessional Lutheran Authority of Scripture Consider themselves centrist
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLBA) www.clba.org	15,000	116 in U.S. 1,500 in other countries	1900: The result of a spiritual awakening in the 1890's	Biblical inerrancy Confessional Lutheran
Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) www.evangelicallutheran-synod.org	21,729	142 congregations 12 mission churches	1918: Broke off from the Norwegian Lutheran Church over the issue of conversion	Orthodox confessional Lutheran Inerrancy of Bible
Church of the Lutheran Confession (CoLC) www.clclutheran.org	8,000	75 congregations in 24 states with missions in Asia and Africa	1960: From WELS, LCMS, & ELS (The Synodical Conference) over unity of belief	Confessional Lutheran Inerrancy of Bible
The American Association Of Lutheran Churches (TAALC) www.taalc.org		78	1987: An alternative of the ALC merger with LCA & AELC to form the ELCA, 12 congregations	Sees itself in the conservative middle of Lutheranism; Lutheran Confessions; Inerrancy of Bible
Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (ALCA) www.apostolic-lutheran.org	7,700	60	Finnish – came out of renewal in northern Finland	Creeds, Luther's Small Catechism regeneration
The Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC) www.orgsites.com/pa/lutheranepc/		44	1912: the Evangelical Protestant Church of North America; reorganized in 1999 to add the word Lutheran; formed out of concerns being seen in the wider Lutheran body	Inerrancy of Bible in the original languages; grace alone, faith alone, word alone.
Coalition of Renewal (CORE) www.lutherancore.org		~123	Free standing group within the ELCA	

At-a-Glance

Polity	Education	Pensions Benefits	Role of Women	Sanctity of Life?	Marriage 1 F/1M	Other
Congregational	10 colleges 2 seminaries publishing house		No May serve on boards and vote	Yes	Yes	Informal fellowship with TAALC
Congregational	4 schools of ministerial education 1 liberal arts college 1 seminary publishing house	Yes: Pensions & health insurance for pastor & staff	No	Yes	Yes	Involved in missions; informal fellowship with ELS
Congregational	1 Bible school 1 seminary publishing house	Yes: Pensions & health insurance	No May serve as lay leaders	Yes	Yes	Not an incorporated synod, but a free association easy in/easy out
Congregational	None, but has a working relationship with several seminaries	Yes & health plan	yes	Yes	Yes	An association of congregations, in process of becoming a synod; formal fellowship with Augsburg Lutheran Church
Congregational	1 seminary 1 academy	Pension & health plan	No	Yes	Yes	Strong in missions, both in North America & abroad; Bible translation; nursing home; Bible camp/retreat facilities
Congregational	1 college 1 seminary hymnal publications	Yes: health plan with WELS	No May serve as lay leaders but cannot vote	Yes	Yes	Full fellowship with WELS
Congregational	publishing house; day schools HS college & seminary share campus		No		Yes	Emphasis on education; require unity in scriptural doctrine & practice before they will fellowship
Congregational	seminary hosted by LCMS on LCMS campus	Yes: Pensions & health insurance	No Ordination Deaconess Program Available	Yes	Yes	Priority on evangelism and world missions; in fellowship with LCMS since 2007
Congregational						Radio ministry missions
Episcopal	1 seminary		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mission minded; active in evangelistic ministries, chaplaincy, counseling, etc.; informal fellowship with the AIELC

Church Body	Interpretation of Scripture	Ordination and Role of Women	Communion Practices	Congregational Autonomy	Size of the Denomination	Proximity of Congregations	Pastoral Resources/Seminary
LCMS	Confessional Lutheran	No; women may serve on boards; can vote	Closed	National structure with 35 districts, ~ 650 "circuits" distributed under the districts; 7 to 20 congr. per circuit.	2.6 million 6075 cong.	National and international. 125 congregations in WA	10 colleges; 2 seminaries; publishing house
WELS	Confessional Lutheran; Biblical inerrancy	No; Cannot vote.	Closed	The synod in convention determines the direction the organization	380,000 1200 cong. In U.S. & 24 countries	National and international.	4 schools of ministerial ed.; 1 liberal arts college; 1 sem. publishing house.
AFLC	Biblical inerrancy; Priesthood of believers	Not as clergy; can serve in lay leadership	unknown	The congregation directs its own affairs. Each congregation is a separate corporation	275 congregations in 25 states	8 congregations in WA, 3 in OR	1 Bible school; 1 seminary; a publishing house
LCMC	Confessional Lutheran; Authority of Scripture; centrist	Yes	Open	LCMC is congregational in structure, rejecting the historic episcopate adopted by the ELCA	284 congregations, 60 joined since August 2009	11 congregations in WA and OR	No; but has a working relationship with several seminaries
CLBA	Biblical inerrancy Confessional Lutheran	No ordination of women; may not serve as an elder.	unknown	The local congregation is autonomous.	15,000 members in 116 cong. in U.S. 1500 in other countries	16 congregations in Northwest	1 Seminary 1 academy
ELS	Orthodox confessional Lutheran Biblical inerrancy	Lay leaders No ordination; no suffrage	Closed	Synod hierarchy: As each new congregation is accepted into membership in the synod, the synod secretary shall assign it to one of the circuits of the synod.	21,729 members in 142 cong. 12 mission churches	11 congregations in WA and OR	1 college 1 seminary hymnal; publications
CoLC	Confessional Lutheran Inerrancy of Bible,	No women in leadership roles	Closed	Autonomy lies with congregation	8000 members 75 congregations in 24 states	3 congregations in WA and 1 in ID	Publishing house; Christian day schools; HS. College & seminary share campus
TAALC	Sees itself conservative middle of Lutheranism; Lutheran Confessions; Inerrancy of Bible	Women not ordained; have a deaconess program	"responsible communion," which is neither open nor closed simply tell people what we believe	Locally, each congregation can determine how it desires to govern itself. AALC is a voluntary association	78 congregations	2 congregations in WA, 1 in OR	Seminary hosted by LCMS (on LCMS campus)
ALCA	Creeds, Luther's Small Catechism regeneration	Unknown	Open	ALCA has no central headquarters facility and 10 national board members. The national organization is governed by an elected board	7,700 members in 60 congregations	10 in Northwest	Unknown
LEPC	Inerrancy of Bible in the original languages; grace alone, faith alone, word alone.	Yes – men and women both may serve in leadership	Open	Regional/synod bishops. See constitution and by-laws	44 congregations	Unknown	1 seminary
CORE		Yes	Open	Voted to create "a free-standing synod for all faithful Lutherans.	Not a denomination yet — a network of ELCA congregations	National	



Richland Lutheran Church

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*It isn't too late to join the God Sightings
One-Year Bible readings! There are still
Bibles and companion guides
available in the narthex. Be sure to
pick up your name plate at the same
time you get your Bible.*

Pastor Martens will be offering an
Overview of Lutheran Denominations
to help us look at the options before
our congregation. The same
presentation will be offered between
services on **Sunday, January 17**, and
following the **Saturday evening
service on January 16.**