

# J.W.C. LINDEMANN

## First President of the First Teachers' College

BORN: **JANUARY 6, 1827** Göttingen, Kingdom of Hanover, Germany

DIED: **JANUARY 15, 1879** Addison, Ill.

**N**O ONE WHO KNEW Johann Christoph Wilhelm Lindemann as a youth would have expected him to become a teacher or a pastor, let alone the president of a Lutheran teachers' college, but he did. The providence of God selected the right man.

Lindemann's father was head clerk in the royal chancery in Göttingen. His mother died when he was still a boy, but his father made sure he received a good elementary education. Neither at home nor at school was the importance of Christianity recognized. Lindemann was confirmed but later recalled, "My soul was dead. I have no spiritual memories of that day at all." His father lacked the resources to further his education, so he sent him off to learn a trade from his uncle, a cabinet maker. Lindemann learned it but never found it satisfying.

At age 19, he decided to go places — literally. He went to Leipzig where he joined the "German Catholics," a religious sect that ignored (or rejected) basic Christian doctrines like the Trinity. Now really interested in religion for the first time, Lindemann decided to become a missionary for the movement. But a message from his former pastor caused Lindemann to think again. He read Scripture, recognized his errors and learned to appreciate the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. But he still wanted to become a missionary.

His efforts to achieve this goal failed, so he began preparing himself for teaching. Meanwhile, he met people who had separated from the state church in order to remain true Lutherans. When an opportunity arrived to go to America and teach at a Lutheran school, Lindemann

accepted in spite of having little experience or formal education (only about six months). He arrived in 1848 and met his new pastor, F.C.D. Wyneken, a founder of the Missouri Synod. At Wyneken's urging, a few years later, he went to the Fort Wayne seminary and then became a pastor in Cleveland.

From its beginnings, the Synod committed itself to training teachers for its parochial schools. In 1864, it established a teachers' college in Addison, Ill., and called Lindemann to be its director (i.e., president). He took on the task with energy and commitment and helped to create an institution of higher learning firmly committed to Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions.

Lindemann also wrote extensively for the Church. In addition to works regarding education, including the booklet "Dr. Martin Luther as Educator of the Youth" (1866), he composed poems, stories and biographies, and he edited the American Calendar for German Lutherans.

Despite his lack of formal education, Lindemann's abilities and dedication contributed greatly to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit [lcms.org/175](http://lcms.org/175).**



### DISCOVER MORE

Alfred J. Freitag, *College with a Cause: A History of Concordia Teachers College* (River Forest: Concordia Teachers College, 1964), 39–58.

A.C. Stellhorn, "J. C. W. Lindemann," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (October 1941): 65–92.

Jeffrey Leininger, organizer, "150th Anniversary of Concordia University Chicago," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (Fall 2014).



1847 2022

**ONLY JESUS**  
NO OTHER NAME

– 175 YEARS –

# J.W.C. LINDEMANN

## *First President of the First Teachers' College*

BORN: **JANUARY 6, 1827** *Göttingen, Kingdom of Hanover, Germany*

DIED: **JANUARY 15, 1879** *Addison, Ill.*

**N**O ONE WHO KNEW Johann Christoph Wilhelm Lindemann as a youth would have expected him to become a teacher or a pastor, let alone the president of a Lutheran teachers' college, but he did. The providence of God selected the right man.

Lindemann's father was head clerk in the royal chancery in Göttingen. His mother died when he was still a boy, but his father made sure he received a good elementary education. Neither at home nor at school was the importance of Christianity recognized. Lindemann was confirmed but later recalled, "My soul was dead. I have no spiritual memories of that day at all." His father lacked the resources to further his education, so he sent him off to learn a trade from his uncle, a cabinet maker. Lindemann learned it but never found it satisfying.

At age 19, he decided to go places — literally. He went to Leipzig where he joined the "German Catholics," a religious sect that ignored (or rejected) basic Christian doctrines like the Trinity. Now really interested in religion for the first time, Lindemann decided to become a missionary for the movement. But a message from his former pastor caused Lindemann to think again. He read Scripture, recognized his errors and learned to appreciate the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. But he still wanted to become a missionary.

His efforts to achieve this goal failed, so he began preparing himself for teaching. Meanwhile, he met people who had separated from the state church in order to remain true Lutherans. When an opportunity arrived to go to America and teach at a Lutheran school, Lindemann

accepted in spite of having little experience or formal education (only about six months). He arrived in 1848 and met his new pastor, F.C.D. Wyneken, a founder of the Missouri Synod. At Wyneken's urging, a few years later, he went to the Fort Wayne seminary and then became a pastor in Cleveland.

From its beginnings, the Synod committed itself to training teachers for its parochial schools. In 1864, it established a teachers' college in Addison, Ill., and called Lindemann to be its director (i.e., president). He took on the task with energy and commitment and helped to create an institution of higher learning firmly committed to Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions.

Lindemann also wrote extensively for the Church. In addition to works regarding education, including the booklet "Dr. Martin Luther as Educator of the Youth" (1866), he composed poems, stories and biographies, and he edited the American Calendar for German Lutherans.

Despite his lack of formal education, Lindemann's abilities and dedication contributed greatly to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit [lcms.org/175](http://lcms.org/175).**



### DISCOVER MORE

Alfred J. Freitag, *College with a Cause: A History of Concordia Teachers College* (River Forest: Concordia Teachers College, 1964), 39–58.

A.C. Stellhorn, "J. C. W. Lindemann," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (October 1941): 65–92.

Jeffrey Leininger, organizer, "150th Anniversary of Concordia University Chicago," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (Fall 2014).



1847 2022

**ONLY JESUS**  
NO OTHER NAME

– 175 YEARS –