

LCMS

Frequently Asked Questions

Worship/Congregational Life – Membership

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Membership

How do I become an LCMS member?

Q: *What do I need to do to become a member of an LCMS congregation?*

A: Pastors of LCMS congregations typically conduct a series of instruction/membership classes on a regular basis for adults who are interested in joining the congregation or learning more about what the LCMS believes. The length and nature of these classes varies from congregation to congregation, so those wishing to join an LCMS church are encouraged to speak with the pastor of the church. (You may use the Congregation Locator on the LCMS Web site to locate LCMS congregations in your area.) For those who come from a (non-LCMS) Lutheran background, these classes serve as a kind of "refresher" course in Lutheran doctrine, and as a way of clarifying the differences between the LCMS and other Lutherans. For those coming from other denominations, these classes provide a thorough overview of the LCMS' central and foundational teachings and beliefs.

Usage: We urge you to contact an LCMS pastor in your area for more in-depth discussion.

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Why should a person join a congregation?

Q: Could you please tell me why a person should join a congregation? Couldn't they just go to the church, give a little here and there, and do the things a member does without joining? What benefits would I have by joining a church?

A: Joining a church says to the public you are a Christian, that you are a member of God's own people, who are called "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), and that you believe and act thus and thus as a witness to the Christian faith and as an example to others. It means that you are doing what the very first Christians did in joining together to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42). It means that you will be able to receive the encouragement, strength, prayers, baptism, the Lord's Supper and the application of God's Word from fellow Christians and a pastor, which you may not have the privilege of receiving as a non-member. It will tell other Christians and the world that you have considered it a serious matter to be able to join together with Christians to support the work of the church of calling a pastor, providing instruction in the Christian faith for the youth, adults, the older set, doing evangelism and mission work at home and abroad.

It would not only witness to other people who you are and what you are about, but it would show God that what He wants of His groups of His chosen, His own people, that you are not just talking about and maybe doing half-heartedly, but are involved whole-heartedly in doing what He expects. Joining is a serious declaration that you intend-with His help-to participate fully in doing the things of God. In most congregations, only members who have joined receive the Lord's Supper, the privilege of voting, recognition by the government for tax purposes, full use of the church and other amenities. What would happen to God's church if everyone decided not to join with other Christians to BE His own people?

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What are the most common names for LCMS congregations?

Q: *What are the most common names for LCMS congregations?*

A: The 12 most common names for LCMS congregations are:

Trinity	569
St. John	467
St. Paul	464
Immanuel	325
Zion	323
Grace	235
Faith	221
Our Savior	168
Redeemer	168
Christ	144
Good Shepherd	136
St. Peter	131

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What are the largest LCMS congregations? (2 pages)

Q: What are the largest LCMS congregations, according to baptized membership?

A: Based on the most current data available, these are the LCMS congregations reporting 3000+ baptized members, along with average worship attendance.

	Location	Baptized Membership	Avg. Worship Attendance
Hales Corners	Hales Corners, Wis.	8,659	3,235
Concordia	San Antonio, Texas	8,265	2,440
St. John	Ellisville, Mo.	5,692	1,871
Hosanna	Mankato, Minn.	5,345	1,846
St. Lorenz	Frankenmuth, Mich.	5,003	1,600
Immanuel	Macomb, Mich.	4,966	1,345
Trinity	Roselle, Ill.	4,597	917
Saint Johns	Orange, Calif.	4,322	1,813
King of Kings	Omaha, Neb.	4,054	2,013
Faith	Appleton, Wis.	3,976	915
Divine Shepherd	Omaha, Neb.	3,955	1,039
St. Lukes	Oviedo, Fla.	3,949	1,288
Woodbury	Woodbury, Minn.	3,921	1,431
St. Peter	Macomb, Mich.	3,879	1,175
St. Peters	Columbus, Ind.	3,811	1,100
Zion	St. Charles, Mo.	3,810	980
Mount Olive	Weston, Wis.	3,735	1,053
Immanuel	St. Charles, Mo.	3,707	1,022
Immanuel	Seymour, Ind.	3,553	961
Trinity	Utica, Wis.	3,511	1,516
Trinity Klein	Spring, Texas	3,437	1,391
Trinity	Bloomington, Ill.	3,256	857
Carmel	Carmel, Ind.	3,226	1,306
Faith	Troy, Mich.	3,214	1,312
Redeemer	Austin, Texas	3,211	878
St. James	Lafayette, Ind.	3,176	570
Christ	Phoenix, Ariz.	3,150	1,133
Salem	Tomball, Texas	3,096	1,276
Saint Paul	Decatur, Ill.	3,060	810
Redeemer	Fort Collins, Colo.	3,009	1,242

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LCMS conventions (2 pages)

Q: *When and where has the LCMS met in convention and which cities have hosted it?*

A: The LCMS has met in convention in:

General Conventions	Delegate Conventions	Year	Place
1	--	1847	Chicago
2	--	1848	St. Louis
3	--	1849	Fort Wayne
4	--	1850	St. Louis
5	--	1851	Milwaukee
6	--	1852	Fort Wayne
7	--	1853	Cleveland
8	--	1854	St. Louis
9	--	1857	Fort Wayne
10	--	1860	St. Louis
11	--	1863	Fort Wayne
12	--	1864	Fort Wayne
13	--	1866	St. Louis
14	--	1869	Fort Wayne
15	--	1872	St. Louis
16	1	1874	Fort Wayne
17	2	1878	St. Louis
18	3	1881	Fort Wayne
19	4	1884	St. Louis
20	5	1887	Fort Wayne
21	6	1890	Milwaukee
22	7	1893	St. Louis
23	8	1896	Fort Wayne
24	9	1899	St. Louis
25	10	1902	Milwaukee
26	11	1905	Detroit
27	12	1908	Fort Wayne
28	13	1911	St. Louis
29	14	1914	Chicago
30	15	1917	Milwaukee

31	16	1920	Detroit
32	17	1923	Fort Wayne
33	18	1926	St. Louis
34	19	1929	River Forest
35	20	1932	Milwaukee
36	21	1935	Cleveland
37	22	1938	St. Louis
38	23	1941	Fort Wayne
39	24	1944	Saginaw
40	25	1947	Chicago
41	26	1950	Milwaukee
42	27	1953	Houston
43	28	1956	St. Paul
44	29	1959	San Francisco
45	30	1962	Cleveland
46	31	1965	Detroit
47	32	1967	New York
48	33	1969	Denver
49	34	1971	Milwaukee
50	35	1973	New Orleans
51	36	1975	Anaheim
52	37	1977	Dallas
53	38	1979	St. Louis
54	39	1981	St. Louis
55	40	1983	St. Louis
56	41	1986	Indianapolis
57	42	1989	Wichita
58	43	1992	Pittsburgh
59	44	1995	St. Louis
60	45	1998	St. Louis
61	46	2001	St. Louis
62	47	2004	St. Louis
63	48	2007	Houston
64	49	2010	Houston
65	50	2013	St. Louis
66	51	2016	Milwaukee

Host Cities	# held there		
St. Louis	21		
Fort Wayne	13		
Milwaukee	8		
Chicago	4		
Cleveland	3		
Denver	1		
Detroit	3		
Houston	3		
New Orleans	1		
New York	1		
Saginaw	1		
St. Paul	1		
San Francisco	1		
Anaheim	1		
Indianapolis	1		
Wichita	1		
Pittsburgh	1		

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LCMS presidents and their terms in office

Q: What are the names of the LCMS presidents and their terms in office?

A:

President	Terms in Office	Residence
C.F.W. Walther	1847–50; 1864–78	St. Louis
F. C. D. Wyneken	1850–64	St. Louis, 1850–59; Freidheim, IN, 1859–64
H. C. Schwan	1878–99	Cleveland, OH
Franz Pieper	1899–1911	St. Louis
F. Pfotenhauer	1911–35	Chicago
J. W. Behnken	1935–62	Oak Park, 1935–51; St. Louis, 1951–62
Oliver Harms	1962–69	St. Louis
J. A. O. Preus	1969–81	St. Louis
Ralph A. Bohlmann	1981–92	St. Louis
Alvin Barry	1992–2001	St. Louis
Robert T. Kuhn	2001	St. Louis
Gerald B. Kieschnick	2001–2010	St. Louis
Matthew C. Harrison	2010–	St. Louis

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