

LCMS Pledge of Support to Confessional Lutherans in Australia

June 7, 2023

The Lutheran Church Missouri—Synod (LCMS) works to advance confessional Lutheranism worldwide. We aim to conserve and promote the true doctrine of Christ and protect against false doctrine and practice. In all things, we seek to recognize agreement in the Gospel in all its articles and in the administration of Christ's sacraments according to the divine Word (see Augsburg Confession VII 2, Apology VII and VIII 5 and Solid Declaration X 31).

The LCMS will work to support and sustain confessional Lutheranism in Australia. In February 2023, the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA)¹ convened its Twentieth Convention of General Synod in Melbourne, Victoria, and approved a motion that would allow for women's ordination as early as 2024. Under a "one doctrine, two practices" construct, some districts would ordain men and women to the pastoral ministry, while other districts would ordain only men. In response, over 500 clergy and laity in Australia signed a "Letter of Confession" on April 18, 2023, the 502nd anniversary of Martin Luther's "Here I Stand" speech at Worms, Germany, in 1521. The letter states:

This vision of an LCA with two, not just different, but mutually contradictory teachings and practices on the office of the ministry will result in the breaking of fellowship around altar and pulpit, striking at the very heart of the church's true unity. ... We reject any attempt to bring about a false sense of "church unity" by imposing upon the LCA two mutually contradictory doctrines and practices of ministry by political and procedural means, when we are called by God and our own confessions to judge all teachings in the church by the standard of the Scriptures, ... the "only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine and life" (Article 2 of the [LCA] constitution). ... The question of who is permitted to fill the office of public ministry is a doctrinal matter according to the Lutheran confessions. Those in the LCA who have been promoting the ordination of women have not been able to offer a clear and convincing Scriptural argument for the practice that would override the biblical foundations (**1 COR. 14:34-35; 1 TIM. 2:11-14**) for a male-only pastorate in the LCA.

The LCMS has publicly supported the LCA's Theses of Agreement and Constitution, with their commitment to Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. This recent LCA convention resolution has departed from this foundation.

The LCMS lauds the faithful witness of the Australian Lutheran signatories of the "Letter of Confession." The LCMS pledges them our prayers, assistance and support to advance confessional Lutheranism in Australia. With the author of Hebrews, we say, "He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (**HEB. 13:5-6**).

¹ The LCMS is not in church fellowship with the LCA.