

What does being a Lutheran mean?

“My family and I don’t come to Church on Sunday because we *have* to. We come because we *want* to.”

“In this Church I have a meaningful say in my religion.”

“Our kids really enjoy Sunday School and it gives us something to share as a family.”

“I was raised in another church but drifted away from it. The Lutheran Church has a Christian service I was familiar with and a Church I can truly believe in. I feel comfortable here.”

“Lutheranism gives me a moral compass that helps me every day.”

“I’m proud of my religion. Lutherans are involved in the real world and making a difference.”

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). For more information about ELCA and Lutheranism, visit the ELCA website:

www.elca.org

How can you experience the Lutheran Church?

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sunday Service
10:30 a.m.

“We are a progressive Christian Church, founded out of a reform movement to bring the Church closer to the people and make it more relevant to our daily lives.

After nearly 500 years Lutherans continue that commitment by applying Christ’s teachings to today’s world. Our ministries support and nourish both the body and soul, and can be a source of inspiration for all who seek it.”

Rev. Paul Knudsen
Pastor

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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About
the

Lutheran
Church



**What the
Lutheran
Church
offers
you**

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The Lutheran Church



Lutheran History

The Lutheran Church was founded in the 1500's as a reform movement to the Roman Catholic Church.

Martin Luther, who was born in Germany in 1483, is known as the Father of Protestantism. He had studied to become a lawyer before becoming a priest. While continuing his studies, he discovered significant differences between what he read in the Bible and the theology and practices of the Catholic church. On October 31, 1517, he challenged the church on a number of theological issues in the hope that the church would reform its practices and be more consistent with the teachings of the Bible and relevant to the people of the day.

What started as an academic debate escalated to a religious war and, as a result, there was not a reformation of the Catholic church but a total separation from it.

Our Beliefs

Lutherans believe people are saved by the grace of God alone. Our good works are done in thankfulness for all that God has given to us — not as a penance for salvation. We believe salvation is gained through faith in Jesus Christ. We believe the Bible, read and interpreted in its context, contains the standards for our daily lives, but is not a definitive record of history or science. We believe the Church exists to hear and carry out those teachings.

One True Church?

Lutherans make no claim of infallibility or perfection. We believe we have found the right way to God's grace, but acknowledge that there may be others with equal claim. Lutherans recognize a wider fellowship of churches and regularly work alongside them in ecumenical ministries, social services and relief efforts for those in need.

Church Structure

Lutheran Churches are congregation-based and run by the members of each individual Church through an elected Church Council. A Pastor — who may be a man or woman, married or single — is selected by the Council as a theological and moral leader. Bishops are elected to a fixed term of office by representatives of the congregation. We look to them for guidance, inspiration and leadership in the administration of the Church.

Church Services

Our Sunday services are traditional Christian services based on the Lutheran Book of Worship and include the sharing of Holy Communion. If you are able to receive communion in your home church, you are always welcome to receive communion at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Our Ministries & Work

Lutheran churches are deeply rooted in a sense of mission and ecumenicalism. Bethlehem Lutheran Church is led by an active Church Council with Commissions on a variety of issues, including Evangelism, Worship, Fellowship, the Bay Ridge Center, and our Lutheran Elementary School Board. Our congregation is an active part of the Bay Ridge community and uses our Church and its ministries to serve all those in need. We welcome the advice, participation and input from all of our members in helping to make our service and our work fulfilling for all.

Membership

Anyone baptized in a Christian church or from another faith is welcome to join Bethlehem Lutheran Church as a member. We offer instructions for children in 5th Grade and new member classes for adults.

There are more than 5 million members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in nearly 11,000 churches. Bethlehem Lutheran Church is just one place — but it can be a place for you.

A place of faith. A place for you.