

Augsburg Confession

Fall 2025

Session 13 – Article VII and VIII – The Church

Review

If we trust in our works for a good standing before God, what are we saying about Christ's work?

Question 4 –*In order to rightly understand "good works," what needs to be understood first and foremost? (Article XX Lines 19-22)*

Question 5 - *How can we say good works are necessary in light of the doctrine of Christ and justification? (Read AC XX lines 27-34)*

Question 6 - *Lutherans are not against good works. Finish these two summaries of Luther's explanation of good works*

"Good works are works that flow from faith and from the joy of heart that has come to us because we have forgiveness of sins through _____

"God does not need our good works, but our _____ does."

SCENARIO

Bob and Kathy Johnson have been your neighbors for over twenty years. Their children and yours have been best of friends. When you had your third child, Kathy was there for you. When you had emergency surgery, Bob planted your crops. You were almost like family. After twenty years, Bob and Kathy have decided to move to a different state to be closer to their children and grandchildren. You've had a long hard week and you were looking forward to relaxing on the weekend. But you just found out Bob and Kathy need help packing.

Ending A. You say to your wife, "I suppose we should go help Bob and Kathy, even though I don't want to. If we go help them, maybe God will show a little favor toward us and give us a good crop this year." *How is ending A not consistent with the Augsburg Confession?*

Ending B. You say to your wife, "Look at our list of good works, honey. How many have we done so far this week? I guess we need a few more. Let's go help Bob and Kathy." *How is ending B not consistent with the Augsburg Confession?*

Ending C. You look at your wife and say, "Let's go help the Johnsons. How about we pick up a pizza on our way and take it over there? What kind of pizza would they like?" *How is ending C consistent with the Augsburg Confession?*

Article VII and VIII – The Church

Read Augsburg Confession Article VII (7), "The Church." (pg 13)

Question 1 - *What is the Church?*

Question 2 - *How do the following verses define the Church?*

Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 5:25-27

John 10:16

Romans 12:4-5; and Colossians 1:18

1 Peter 2:5

Question 3 – *How does Hebrews 10:23-25 describe what the church is to do?*

Read Augsburg Confession Article VIII (8), "What the Church Is." (pg 14)

Read Matthew 13:24-30.

Question 4 - *What is the "visible" church? What is the "Invisible Church?"*

Question 5 - *In Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, is Jesus saying "the Church" does not judge sin? What does this mean?*

True/False time - **For each statement, choose true or false and explain your answer.**

T	F	The Church is the congregation of saints.
T	F	The Lutheran Church denies power to the Sacraments administered by hypocrites or wicked men.
T	F	At its core, the Church is a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Spirit in hearts.
T	F	The fellowship of the Church has outward marks so that the Church can be recognized as such.
T	F	The marks of the Church, by which she is recognized, are the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ.
T	F	The Church is people scattered throughout the whole world who agree about the Gospel and have the same Christ and the same Sacraments, whether they have the same or different human traditions.
T	F	The Church is properly the pillar of the truth.
T	F	The Church consists of those persons who have a secret knowledge of God and levels of authority.

T	F	The true unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar ceremonies instituted by humans; however, it is pleasing, for the sake of peace, that universal ceremonies be kept.
T	F	We willingly keep the order of the Mass in the churches, the Lord's Day.
T	F	The Church is the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd.

A BIT OF HISTORY ABOUT THE DONATIST CONTROVERSY

Nomenclature is the term for a system of names, and the various titles given to leaders of the church is one example of such a system. It is very difficult to match up the nomenclature of leaders in the church throughout the church's history. The title of a church leader in the Bible is often different from the titles given in the Early Church or even in churches today.

For instance, biblical titles such as "overseer" and "bishop" (1 Timothy 3:2) were used for what we call "pastor" today. What the Bible calls a "deacon" (1 Timothy 3:8) is what we might call an "elder" today, and the job description is still not quite the same.

In AD 313, the priest Donatus became the "bishop" of Carthage in the area of North Africa. Since this was a time of Christian persecution, the church wrestled with the question of how to deal with pastors, priests, and bishops who handed over the Sacred Books (Bible) to a persecutor to escape persecution. Out of this rose a great theological debate over these questions: Should the lapsed clergy be excommunicated from the Church? Are the Sacraments valid that were administered by a clergy deserving excommunication?

Bishop Donatus believed that such clergy should be excommunicated and that the Sacraments administered by such clergy were not valid. In other words, he believed a Baptism performed by a clergyman deserving excommunication was not a real Baptism. And when the Lord's Supper was consecrated and served by clergy deserving excommunication, Donatus did not believe it was the real body and blood of Jesus Christ and that it forgave sin. These beliefs became known as Donatism.

Question 6 – *What gives the Sacraments their validity and power?*

Acts 2:38-39

John 3:5-6

Titus 3:5

Matthew 26:28

1 John 1:7

Question 7 – *If the validity of the Sacraments do not rest upon the faith and life of a pastor, then why does it matter if the pastor is above reproach or even a believer?*

Scenario

You and your spouse had your first child, Emma. A week after Emma was born, Pastor Jones baptized her. Pastor Jones was very much a part of your family's life. As a little girl, Emma would run into church looking for Pastor Jones to give him a big hug. Pastor Jones was there when Emma started Sunday School, at each of her Christmas programs, and at Vacation Bible School. Emma learned the catechism with Pastor Jones and was confirmed by him.

To the shock of the congregation, it was discovered that Pastor Jones was involved in a secret same-sex relationship. He soon divorced his wife and left the ministry.

After sorting out all the pain of a fallen pastor, you begin to think of Emma. In the back of your mind, you wonder how long Pastor Jones was living this secret life. You begin to worry: Was he living in this sin when he baptized Emma? More so, if he baptized Emma in a time of his own impenitence, was Emma's Baptism valid? Was Emma really baptized?

Question 8 - *How do the following passages help Emma's mother and father navigate through their concerns?*

Matthew 28:19-20.

1 Peter 3:21.

Galatians 3:26-27.

References

Lutheran Doctrine and Practice Today, A Study Based on Scripture and the Augsburg Confession, Rev. Dr. James A Baneck, North Dakota District President. 2015. CPH.

The Augsburg Confession, <https://www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Augsburg-Confession-Study-Guide.pdf>

Book of Concord Online, The Original Home of the Book of Concord, <https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/>