

Augsburg Confession

Fall 2025 – Winter 2026

Session 13 – Article VII and VIII – The Church Pt 3

Article XXIV – The Mass

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.

Read Augsburg Confession XXIV – The Mass

Match the terms with their definitions below.

A. The Mass	B. The Sacrament	C. Bishop	D. Presbyter
E. Deacon	F. Ceremonies	G. Saints	

	Used in the New Testament for those who governed and directed the Christian communities, preached the Gospel, administered the Sacraments, used the Keys
	The Service of the Lord's Supper, which Lutherans would most often refer to as "the Divine Service"
	Following the pattern of the Church Year, various festival days, vestments worn by clergy, use of candles, crucifixes, rites, decorations, and human traditions
	Also known as "elder," serving in the church, supporting the Office of the Holy Ministry, sometimes known to preach and teach (1 Timothy 5:17)

	In the articles addressed here, it refers to the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion
	In these articles of the AC, it refers to persons set apart or canonized as especially holy, who hear and answer prayer
	Faithful people in the church entrusted with special responsibilities for service to their fellow Christians, especially in terms of human care or mercy

Read 1 Corinthians 11:25-26, Acts 2:42 and Acts 20:7

Question 1 - Why does the Lutheran Church celebrate the Mass (Communion, Divine Service)?

Read Leviticus 19:30; Hebrews 12:28; Ecclesiastes 5:1.

The Following statements are from Articles XXIV (The Mass) and Article XXI (Worship of the Saints)

- ❖ "The Mass is held among us and celebrated with the highest reverence" (XXIV 1).
- ❖ "All those able to do so partake of the Sacrament together. This also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship" (XXIV 5).
- ❖ "It can be easily judged that if the churches observed ceremonies correctly, their dignity would be maintained and reverence and piety would increase among the people" (XXI, "Worship of the Saints: A Review of the Various Abuses That Have Been Corrected" 6).

Question 2 – Based on the above statements, why do Lutherans worship the way they do?

Question 3 - Read the following passages. How are these passages incorporated into the Lutheran Divine Service? (Use the LSB to find the answer.)

Mark 10:47- (Pg 152 in the LSB)

Luke 2:14 - (Pg 170 in the LSB)

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9 – (Pg 195 in the LSB)

John 20:19 – (Pg 163 in the LSB)

John 1:29 – (Pg 217 in the LSB)

Luke 2:29-32 – (Pg 258 in the LSB)

- ❖ The Lutheran liturgical structure (such as LSB Divine Services) originates predominately from Alexandria, North Africa.

Question 4 – *Using the LSB, From where do the following hymns originate (text and/or tune)?*

LSB 725	
LSB 380	
LSB 871	
LSB 676	
LSB 466	
LSB 808	
LSB 357	
LSB 656	
LSB 910	

- ❖ There are various prayer services in the Lutheran Church (Matins, Vespers, Prayer and Preaching) to be used at various times of the day and week. The Divine Service (the Mass, Communion) is the usual Lord's Day Liturgy with the Lord's Supper.

Question 5 – *What do the following statements from Article XXIV Mean?*

"No one is admitted to the Sacrament without first being examined. The people are also advised about the dignity and use of the Sacrament, about how it brings great consolation to anxious consciences, so that they too may learn to believe God and to expect and ask from Him all that is good" (XXIV 6-7).

- ❖ "The Mass was instituted so that those who use the Sacrament should remember, in faith, the benefits they receive through Christ and how their anxious consciences are cheered and comforted" (XXIV 30-31).
- ❖ "Because the Mass is for the purpose of giving the Sacrament, we have Communion every holy day, and if anyone desires the Sacrament, we also offer it on other days, when it is given to all who ask for it" (XX.IV 34).

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/>