

THE TWELVE MISSION THESES

1. We believe, teach, and confess that God's mission (the *Missio Dei*, which belongs to Him and His love for the world) centers in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16-17).
2. We believe, teach, and confess that God's love has given His apostolic authority to Christ to carry out the mission to administer forgiveness of sins and eternal life to the whole world (John 17:1-3; Luke 4:18-19; 24:45-49; Matthew 28:18-20). The truth, *freely justified for Christ's sake through faith* (see the *Augsburg Confession IV* – Justification (Tappert)), is Christianity's central teaching. All other doctrines are antecedent or consequent.
3. We believe, teach, and confess that all who are baptized in Christ are co-heirs and co-associates with Christ and participate in God's mission in relation to and through Him alone (1 Corinthians 1:9; 3:1-23).
4. We believe, teach, and confess that the *Missio Dei* is the primary lens through which we read the Scriptures, and which determines our mission being, purpose, and witness, individually and collectively (self-governing congregations) as a fellowship of the baptized in Christ (John 17:1-3, 17-20).
5. We believe, teach, and confess that just as God the Father *sent* (*apostello*) His Son Jesus into the world, Jesus *sends* all believers into the world to "seek and save the lost" (John 20:21-23; Luke 19:10).
6. We believe, teach, and confess that the Lord tells us by word and example that the Gospel must be *sent* to the unsaved if they are to hear and be saved (Romans 1:16; 10:14-17) and that the unsaved will not on their own find their way to church in order to hear the Gospel.
7. We believe, teach, and confess that the divine *sending* includes the *sending* of the Holy Spirit to empower the *sent* into their everyday world and lives to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).
8. We believe, teach, and confess that the Lord continues to call His church from the nations (*Una Sancta*) around the world to work mutually in *sending* and receiving "laborers for the harvest" until that day when our Lord's mission is complete (Ephesians 4:1-7; Matthew 9:35-10:1).
9. We believe, teach, and confess that all matters of ritual, programs, and practice(s) are not the essential core of God's mission, nor is the core of God's mission mere performance(s) or the presence of liturgical, ministry or missional exercises and activities (Luke 24:45-47; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

10. We believe, teach, and confess that the focus of the church's sending mission and ministry(ies) is on God's love and mission (*sending*) to the whole world through Christ and not on institutional maintenance, survival, doctrinal purity, or self-interest (Matthew 16:17-19; John 15:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; 1 John 4).

11. We believe, teach, and confess that the mission of the church is driven and empowered by the Gospel of Christ alone and Scripture, God's strong Word alone, as the sole authority for our mission, teaching, witness, and confession (refer to the *Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*) and not by legalism, individualism, separatism, and clericalism, nor by any human authority, power, control, persuasion, or any hierarchy (Romans 1:16; John 5:39; 17:17-19; Galatians 5:1).

12. We believe, teach, and confess that God gives His church a wide variety of gifts and people for the *Missio Dei*, with unique contributions of people of all ethnic backgrounds in the culture of our life together (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12).