



THE LORD'S SUPPER ON THE LORD'S DAY

THE WEEKLY AVAILABILITY OF THE
SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S HOLY BODY AND
BLOOD IN THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20

BASIC SCRIPTURE TEXTS THAT ADDRESS THE PLACE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND ITS AVAILABILITY

I Corinthians 11:23-26 -- 23For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: 24And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. 25After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. 26For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.

Acts 2:42 & 46 -- 42And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 46And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

Acts 20:7 -- 7On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Ephesians 5:29-32 -- 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30because we are members of His body. 31"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

I Corinthians 10:16-17 -- 16The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

John 6:52-57-- 52The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53So Jesus said to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. (See also: Revelation 3:20; John 15:4-5; I Cor. 11, Psalm 23 & 116)*



QUOTATIONS FROM OUR LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS (*THE BOOK OF CONCORD*) ON THE AVAILABILITY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

1] Falsely are our [Lutheran] churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among 2] us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added 3] to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned 4] be taught [what they need to know of Christ]. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people 1 Cor. 14, 2. 9, but it has also been so ordained by man's law. 5] The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public 6] worship. For none are admitted 7] except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. 8] [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament.] This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion 9] toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us. [...] 34] Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holy-day, and, if any desire the Sacrament, also on other days, when it is given to such as ask for it. 35] And this custom is not new in the Church;
+ The Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV, 1-9, 34-35 +

At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we 1] do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things.

+ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV, 1 +

HAS THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD SAID ANYTHING ON THE SUBJECT? YES, THE 1995 CONVENTION OF THE LCMS PASSED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

To Encourage Every Sunday Communion

RESOLUTION 2-08A

Overture 2-51 (CW, pp.149-150)

Whereas, the opportunity to receive the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day was a reality cherished by Luther and set forth clearly with high esteem by our Lutheran Confessions (Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession and of the Apology); and

Whereas, our synod's 1983 CTCR document on the Lord's Supper (p.28) and our Synod's 1986 [1991] translation of Luther's Catechism both remind us that the Scriptures place the Lord's Supper at the center of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20,23), and not as an appendage or an occasional extra; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention encourage its pastors and congregations to study the scriptural, confessional, and historical witness to every Sunday communion with a view toward recovering the opportunity for receiving the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day.

Action: Adopted.

DOES THIS MEAN THAT ALL MUST OR ARE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT EVERY TIME IT IS OFFERED? NO, WE MAKE NO LAWS ABOUT HOW OFTEN THIS GIFT IS RECEIVED. WE ARE ONLY SPEAKING OF ITS WEEKLY AVAILABILITY (See also: I Corinthians 11:28-32)

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther writes in his preface to the Small Catechism: *...since the tyranny of the Pope has been abolished, people are no longer willing to go to the Sacrament and despise it [as something useless and unnecessary]. Here again urging is necessary, however, with this understanding: We are to force no one to believe, or to receive the Sacrament, nor fix any law, nor time, nor place for it, but are to preach in such a manner that of their own accord, without our law, they will urge themselves and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer the Sacrament. This is done by telling them: Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel; for Christ did not say, This omit, or, This despise, but, This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, etc. Verily, He wants it done, and not entirely neglected and despised. This do ye, He says. [...] Hence, you must not make any law in this matter, as the Pope does. Only set forth clearly the benefit and harm, the need and use, the danger and the blessing, connected with this Sacrament, and the people will come of themselves without your compulsion. But if they do not come, let them go and tell them that such belong to the devil as do not regard nor feel their great need and the gracious help of God. But if you do not urge this, or make a law or a bane of it, it is your fault if they despise the Sacrament. How could they be otherwise than slothful if you sleep and are silent? Therefore look to it, ye pastors and preachers.*