



CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Preface

**“Whoever confesses Me before men,
him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”**

Matthew 10:32

I have decided to create this work using the example of older, wiser, faithful pastors. I first published a draft in 2015. Three years later, I rewrote this work and added more questions. The booklet you're now holding is the third edition of "Christian Questions & Answers," and has a total of 142 questions and answers.

In this edition, I made a few changes. The first is that I placed all the Scripture references in bold. I did this to highlight that the Bible answers all these questions. Second, I added a final section called "Objections and Responses to the Practice of Closed Communion." In that section, I listed the most common objections to the faithful and loving practice of Closed Communion and have written a Lutheran response to each complaint.

I hope that this booklet will fulfill two purposes. The first purpose is to lay out in a simple, straightforward way all that we, as Confessional Lutherans, believe, teach, and confess. I never want to surprise anyone in the church with Lutheran doctrine. I want to be transparent and honest with all that I teach, and I never want to "bait and switch" anyone into the congregation. The second purpose is to help Lutherans confess their faith well. Over the years, I've found that although many members know their beliefs, they have difficulty articulating them to others. So, the goal of this book is to strengthen and sharpen your confession of faith.

I recommend reading through this *before* you become a church member, even if you're coming from another LCMS Lutheran Church. There may be Lutheran teachings that your previous pastor didn't teach you or teachings that you didn't learn. I recommend reading through this at least once a year, even if you

have been a lifelong Lutheran. Our sinful nature remembers many things well except for God's Word. While you should read the Small Catechism regularly, I recommend reading this booklet at least once a year to solidify this teaching.

Finally, if God has blessed you with a wife and children, every husband and father should teach this in his home. Ask these questions to your children and listen to their answers. Encourage them when they remember the answer. When they get it wrong, use it as a teaching opportunity. You can also use this booklet as a devotional or as a personal Bible study throughout the year. Go through each question and learn how the Bible verses answer each question. Finally, suppose you have a family member or friend interested in Lutheran doctrine. In that case, give him this work to read through and study independently.

I pray that this work will be a blessing to you and your family and bear much fruit. I pray that God would keep us from doctrinal disunity and continue to bless us with true unity by faith in His Word. God grant it!

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HOLY SCRIPTURE

1. **What is the Bible?**

The Bible is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13).

2. **Why was the Bible written?**

To show us our Savior Jesus Christ, that we might believe in Him (John 20:30–31).

3. **Are there any errors or contradictions in the Bible?**

No. God cannot make mistakes (John 10:35).

4. **What are the two main teachings in the Bible?**

The Law and the Gospel (John 1:17; Romans 3:19–22).

5. **What is the Law?**

The Law is the love God requires of us, and this is summarized in the Ten Commandments (Romans 13:10).

6. **What is the Gospel?**

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus has saved us from sin, death, and hell (Romans 1:16–17).

THE CATECHISM

7. **Who wrote the Catechism?**

Dr. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism in 1529.

8. **What are the six chief parts of Christian Doctrine?**

They are 1) the Ten Commandments, 2) the Creed, 3) the Lord's Prayer, 4) Holy Baptism, 5) Confession & Absolution, and 6) the Sacrament of the Altar.

9. **Why do we believe what the Catechism teaches?**
Because the Catechism agrees with and does not contradict the Bible.
10. **What is the first table of the Law?**
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).
11. **What is the second table of the Law?**
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

12. **Who is the only true God?**
The only true God is the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
13. **What does it mean to have a “god”?**
Whatever you fear, love, or trust in the most is your god (Matthew 6:24).
14. **How does God want us to use His name?**
He wants us to “call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks” (The Second Commandment, Meaning).
15. **What does Sabbath mean?**
Sabbath means day of rest (Genesis 2:2–3).
16. **How is Jesus Christ our Sabbath?**
Jesus gives us true spiritual rest by taking away our sin and guilt (Matthew 11:28–30).
17. **How should we receive the preaching of God’s Word and view it in our daily lives?**
We should “hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it” (The Third Commandment, Meaning).

18. **Why should we honor our parents and other authorities?**
They are God's representatives (**Romans 13**).
19. **Is hatred murder in God's eyes?**
Yes, because every evil desire is sin (**1 John 3:15**).
20. **Why are abortion and euthanasia sins?**
Both of these end in the murder of a human being (**Psalm 139:16; Proverbs 6:16–17**).
21. **Does the government have the authority to kill murderers?**
Yes. God gives the government the authority to punish evil and reward good (**Romans 13; John 19:11; The Fourth Commandment, Meaning**).
22. **What are the three purposes of marriage?**
They are 1) companionship, 2) the procreation of children, and 3) living a chaste and decent life (**Genesis 2:18–25; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:9**).
23. **Why is marriage a life-long union between one man and one woman?**
God not only created the institution of marriage, but He also joins husband and wife together (**Mark 10:8**).
24. **Why is homosexuality a sin?**
God made all human beings unchangeably male or female in order to be fruitful and multiply. Homosexuality is an abomination contrary to God's creation and Word, and, as a result, it cannot bring forth life (**Genesis 1:26–28; Romans 1:24–27**).
25. **Why is sex outside of marriage a sin?**
God made sex for marriage and marriage for sex. They have been joined together by God's gracious Will. All sex outside

of marriage contradicts God's Word (Genesis 2:21–24; 1 Corinthians 6:18).

- 26. Why is living together (cohabitation) a sin, even if they intend to marry one another?**

Cohabitation, that is, living together outside of marriage, is a sin against God. It transgresses His creation and Will. Christians should not live contrary to God's Word, give the appearance of sin, or live in such a way that causes others to stumble (Ephesians 4:17; Ephesians 5:3; Matthew 7).

- 27. To whom does all our property belong?**

All our property belongs to God. We are only stewards of what He has given us (Psalm 50).

- 28. What should we do with our property?**

We should use it to serve our neighbor because God desires to take care of the poor through us (Psalm 24:1; Ephesians 4:28).

- 29. What should we do to protect our neighbor's reputation?**

We should "defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way" (The Eighth Commandment, Meaning).

- 30. Why is gossip a sin, even when it's true?**

We should defend our neighbor's reputation and do unto others what we have them do unto us (Luke 6:31).

- 31. Why is coveting a sin?**

We should be satisfied with what God has given us whether it's plenty or little (Colossians 3:5).

- 32. Does God threaten to punish all who break His commandments?**

Yes. But God also promises grace and every blessing to all

who listen to and keep His Word (**Exodus 20:5–6**).

33. Who alone has kept God's commandments?

Jesus Christ is the only one who has kept God's commandments in thought, word, deed, and desire (**Galatians 4:4–5; 1 Peter 1:18–19**).

34. What does God's law tell us about ourselves?

We are sinners who truly deserved to burn in hell forever (**Romans 3:20; Matthew 7:23**).

35. What is original sin?

It is the sinful condition we inherited at conception from Adam (**Psalm 51:50**).

36. What are actual sins?

These are sins of thought, word, deed, or desire that we commit every day (**Matthew 5:21–37**).

37. How do you know what is and is not a sin?

God's Law tells us what is and is not a sin (**Romans 7**).

THE CREED

38. Where alone do we find forgiveness of sins?

We find forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ alone (**1 John 2:12**).

39. What is the relationship between God the Father and God the Son?

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity (**John 8:58**).

40. From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed?

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (**John 14:16**).

41. **Who alone is not created?**
God alone is uncreated (John 1:3).
42. **Out of what did God create all things?**
God created all things out of nothing (Hebrews 11:3).
43. **How did God create all things?**
By His Word (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1).
44. **How long did it take God to create all things?**
It did not take God millennia or millions of years to create all things. Holy Scripture plainly says that it took God six regular days consisting of evening and morning to create all things (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11).
45. **What is the crown of God's creation?**
Man, both male and female, is the crown of God's creation (Genesis 5:2; Matthew 19:4).
46. **What is the image of God?**
The image of God is to know God rightly and to love God perfectly (Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 4:20–24).
47. **What is the main difference between the doctrine of creation and the false doctrine of evolution?**
The doctrine of creation reveals that all things came from God, and that their purpose is found in God. The doctrine of evolution claims that everything came from nothing, and that there is no objective purpose to life.
48. **What is the difference between macro- and micro-evolution?**
Macro-evolution is the false teaching that organisms evolve from one kind to another. This teaching is false, without evidence, and contrary to Holy Scripture. Micro-evolution is the teaching that organisms vary and mutate within their

own kinds. This teaching is true, with evidence, and consistent with Holy Scripture.

49. What are angels and what do they do?

Angels are spirits who serve Jesus and watch over Christians (Psalm 91:11).

50. Who is the devil?

The devil is a fallen angel who hates God and His people (Isaiah 14:12–15).

51. How does Jesus describe the devil?

Jesus called him a liar and a murderer (John 8:44).

52. How does the devil murder souls?

Through false doctrine which leads to unbelief (Matthew 7:15–20; Galatians 1:8).

53. What is God's providence?

It means that God provides for everything He has made (Psalm 145:16).

54. What are the two natures in Christ?

Jesus has both a divine nature and a human nature (John 1:14; 8:58).

55. How do we know that Jesus is God?

The Bible ascribes to Jesus divine names, works, and attributes (Colossians 2:9).

56. How do we know that Jesus is a man?

The Bible ascribes to Jesus human names, works, and attributes (John 1:14).

57. **Why do we call Mary the mother of God?**
The child that she bore was and is God (**Luke 1:43ff.**).
58. **Should Christians pray to Mary or the saints?**
No. There is only one Mediator between God and man—
Christ the Lord (**1 Timothy 2:5**).
59. **Whom did Jesus redeem?**
Jesus redeemed all sinners (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8**).
60. **From what has Jesus redeemed you?**
Jesus has redeemed me “from all sins, from death, and from
the power of the devil” (The Second Article, Meaning).
61. **With what did Jesus redeem you?**
He redeemed me “with his holy, precious blood, and with His
innocent suffering and death” (The Second Article, Meaning;
Ephesians 1:7).
62. **What was Christ’s humiliation?**
It was when Jesus in His human nature did not always or
fully use the divine attributes that He had (**Acts 2:23**).
63. **Why was your Savior true man?**
So that He could become my substitute under the law and die
for me (**1 Timothy 2:5**).
64. **What is Christ’s exaltation?**
It is when He always and fully uses all His divine attributes
(**Acts 2:33**).
65. **Why was your Savior true God?**
So that He could defeat my enemies: sin, death, and the devil
(**1 John 5:20**).

66. **List four things Christ's resurrection from the dead proves.**
1) It proves that His teaching is true (**John 20:24–31**).
2) It proves that Jesus is the Son of God (**Romans 1:4**).
3) It proves that our sins are all forgiven (**Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:17**).
4) It proves that Christians will rise to eternal life on the last day (**Romans 6:3–4, 9**).
67. **Why does the Bible emphasize that Christ's tomb was empty?**
Because it proves that Jesus rose bodily from the dead (**John 20**).
68. **What is the three-fold office of Christ?**
It is his office as prophet, priest, and king (**Acts 3:22–23; Hebrews 6:20; 9:11; Matthew 21:5**).
69. **Briefly explain what Jesus does in each of these three offices.**
1) As our prophet, Jesus preaches His holy word through the pastor.
2) As our priest, Jesus pleads for us before God.
3) As our king, Jesus rules over His church by His grace.
70. **Where is Jesus today?**
Jesus is everywhere, especially with His church (**Ephesians 1:1–23**).
71. **What will Jesus do when He returns?**
He will judge the living and the dead (**1 Peter 4:1–8; 2 Timothy 4:1**).
72. **What does the Holy Spirit do for you?**
He makes me holy (**2 Thessalonians 2:13**).

73. **How does the Holy Spirit make you holy?**
The Holy Spirit makes me holy through the “holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting” (The Third Article, Meaning).
74. **Why do you need the Holy Spirit to make you holy?**
Because I am by nature a helpless sinner who can do nothing holy (**Ephesians 2**).
75. **What is the chief topic of the Christian religion?**
The chief topic of the Christian religion is justification through faith alone (**Ephesians 2**).
76. **What does justify mean?**
Justify means to forgive sins or to make an unrighteous person righteous (**Romans 5:1-11**).
77. **Whom has God, for Christ’s sake, justified?**
God, for Christ’s sake, has justified the entire world (**Romans 5:6**).
78. **Where does God offer justification or forgiveness?**
God offers justification or forgiveness in the gospel (**Luke 24:47**).
79. **What is the only way to receive the forgiveness of sins?**
We receive the forgiveness of sins by faith in the gospel (**Romans 10:9**).
80. **What is the Holy Christian Church?**
The Holy Christian Church is the sheep who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd (**John 10:27**).
81. **What are the marks of the Church?**
The marks of the Church are the pure preaching of the

gospel and the right administration of Christ's sacraments (Augsburg Confession, Article 7).

82. Why do we call them the marks of the Church?

Because they mark or identify where the Church is (Augsburg Confession, Article 8).

83. Who alone is the head of the Church?

Jesus Christ alone is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18).

84. What does false doctrine do to churches?

False doctrine divides and scatters churches (Romans 16:17).

85. How can we defend ourselves from false doctrine?

We must mark and avoid all those who teach false doctrine (Romans 16:17).

86. What will happen to the saints on the Last Day?

They will be raised to life and spend eternity with God in the joys of heaven (1 Corinthians 15).

87. What will happen to the unbelievers on the Last Day?

They will be sent to hell where they will suffer God's anger forever (Revelation 21:8).

THE LORD'S PRAYER

88. What is prayer?

Prayer is talking to God through faith in Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:6-7).

89. What are two reasons why we should pray.

- 1) God commands us to pray, and
- 2) God promises to hear us (1 John 5:14-15).

90. **Why can only those who know Christ pray to God?**
Only Christians can pray because only Christians know God (John 1:12; 9:31; Psalm 34:15).
91. **Does God answer every prayer a Christian prays?**
Yes. God answers every prayer a Christian prays in His own way and time (2 Corinthians 1:20).
92. **How does God become your Father?**
God becomes my Father when I am born into his kingdom through Holy Baptism (Galatians 3:26-27).
93. **How is God's name kept holy among us?**
“When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it” (The First Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Meaning)
94. **What is God's kingdom of grace?**
It is Christ's church on earth (Romans 8:17-18, 22-25; 14:17).
95. **What is God's kingdom of glory?**
It is Christ's church in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:50).
96. **How can we know God's will for us?**
We can know God's will for us only from what God tells us in the Bible (Deuteronomy 29:29).
97. **What is our daily bread?**
Our daily bread is “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body” (The Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Meaning).
98. **Why do we forgive those who sin against us?**
We forgive others because God has first forgiven us (Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:13).

99. Why might God test us?

God might test us to drive us to His word and to strengthen our faith (1 Peter 1:6-9).

100. What does “Amen” mean?

“Amen” is a Hebrew word which means “Truly” and “Yes, yes, so shall it be” (The Conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, Meaning).

HOLY BAPTISM

101. What is Baptism?

“Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s word” (Ephesians 5:26).

102. What benefits does Baptism give?

“It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this as the words and promises of God declare” (The Sacrament of Baptism, Meaning; see also Acts 2).

103. Why should babies be Baptized?

- 1) Jesus told us to baptize all nations (Matthew 28). Nations are made up of men and women, adults and children.
- 2) Babies born in sin and in need of a Savior (Psalm 51).
- 3) Jesus died for all people, including babies (John 3).
- 4) Scripture clearly states that children are to be baptized: there is not age limit, in any direction, for the child (Acts 2:38-39).

104. What does Baptism have to do with your daily life?

My baptism brings me God’s forgiveness every single day of my life (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19-20).

105. What does Confirmation have to do with Baptism?

When we are confirmed we publicly confirm and confess the gifts God gave us in baptism (**Romans 10:9**).

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

106. Who earned the right to forgive us our sins?

Jesus earned the right to forgive sins (**Mark 2:10**).

107. To whom did God give the right to forgive sins?

Jesus gave this right to His Church on earth (**John 20:21–23**).

108. Whose sins should be forgiven?

The sins of penitent sinners should be forgiven (**John 20:23**).

109. Whose sins should not be forgiven?

The sins of impenitent sinners should not be forgiven (**Luke 13:3; 17:3**).

110. What is the Office of the Keys?

“It is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent” (The Office of the Keys, Meaning; see also **Matthew 16:19** and **John 20:20–21**).

III. Who exercises this power as Christ’s representative in the congregation?

The pastor exercises this power as Christ’s representative (**John 20:21–23**).

112. Who calls the pastor to a congregation?

God calls the pastor (**Matthew 9:38**).

- 113. How does God call the pastor?**
God calls the pastor through the church (**Ephesians 4**).
- 114. From whom does the pastor receive the authority to preach, to teach, and to administer the sacraments?**
The pastor receives this authority from God Himself (**Matthew 28**).
- 115. What should you do with pastors who teach false doctrine?**
You should mark and avoid them (**Matthew 7:15ff**).
- 116. What does God say about women lay-readers, women distributing communion, or women “pastors”?**
God says, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet” (**1 Timothy 2:12**). And again, God says, “As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should remain in submission, as the Law also says” (**1 Corinthians 14:33–34**).
- 117. What is excommunication?**
Excommunication is the loving act of excluding openly impenitent sinners from the Church (**Matthew 18**).
- 118. What is the purpose of excommunication?**
The purpose of excommunication is to lead the impenitent sinner to acknowledge the severity of his impenitence, to lead him to repentance, and ultimately to bring him back to Christ (**2 Timothy 2:25**).

HOLY COMMUNION

- 119. What is the Lord’s Supper?**
“It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink” (**Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke**

22; 1 Corinthians 11).

120. How do you know that it is Christ's Body and Blood?

Because Jesus says that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood (1 Corinthians 11).

121. Who is worthy to receive the Lord's Supper?

"That person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.'" (The Sacrament of the Altar, Meaning).

122. Should infants receive the Lord's Supper?

No. Little children cannot examine themselves as the Bible teaches us to do (1 Corinthians 11).

123. What is the benefit of receiving the Lord's Supper?

"These words, 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,' show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation" (The Sacrament of the Altar, Meaning).

124. Why should the pastor not give the Lord's Supper to openly impenitent sinners?

Because it would harm them. They would eat and drink Christ's body and blood to their own judgment which would harm them and cause them to be guilty of sinning against Christ's body and blood (1 Corinthians 11).

125. What is Closed Communion?

Closed communion is the biblical practice of giving Christ's body and blood only to those

1) who have been instructed in the Christian faith (Matthew 28:28),

2) who faithfully confess that same faith before God and the Church (1 Corinthians 1:10), and

3) who repent of all their sins (Acts 17:30–31).

126. What does it mean to be instructed in the Christian faith?

The most basic instruction in the Christian faith is the knowledge, belief, and confession of the 6 Chief Parts of the Catechism, namely, The Ten Commandments, The Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Confession and Absolution, and The Lord's Supper. Without knowledge of these things, one is not prepared to receive the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner (See Matthew 28:20).

127. What does it mean to confess this faith before God and the Church?

To confess means to give our verbal and audible "Amen" to the Word of Holy Scripture in the presence of God and the congregation (Matthew 10:32).

OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE PRACTICE OF CLOSED COMMUNION

128. "Isn't Closed Communion a recent innovation?"

No. The early church did not have different "denominations"; instead, they suffered from theological disagreements and contrary teachings (doctrine). These theological disagreements were to be resolved *before* partaking in the Lord's Supper together (1 Peter 3:8; 1 Corinthians 1:10–17; Luke 11:–32).

129. "I was taught *Close* Communion. Aren't we *close enough* to the Reformed, the ELCA, the Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and so on?"

No. Close Communion causes great harm to the church. Denominations exist because of doctrinal disunity in the church, that is, different teachings about God and His Word. God gives us stern warnings about false doctrine (Matthew

7:15–20; Acts 20:29; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Galatians 1:8; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 4:1–4, 16; 6:20–21; 2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1–3; 1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 1:7–11; Jude 1:3; Revelation 22:18). Before we can commune together, we must confess the same doctrine as taught in Holy Scripture.

130. “I was taught *Open Communion*. Shouldn’t communion be open to *all*?”

No. Open Communion causes great harm to the church and Christians. Those who practice Open Communion do not take false doctrine seriously and do not honestly believe it causes significant damage to the unrepentant and unprepared. Also, churches that practice Open Communion have a false unity and are not united in truth or spirit since they tolerate divisions and false doctrine in the church.

131. “Isn’t it impossible to agree on everything?”

It may be impossible to agree on everything else in life, but it’s *not* impossible to have complete agreement in doctrine. Disunity is man’s work, but doctrinal and confessional unity is a gift of God. If every person took their thoughts captive and bowed to the Words of Scripture, there would be no disagreements but only unity (**Philippians 2:2; 1 Peter 3:8; Romans 3:8**). If our brother is in error, we will correct him. But if he refuses that correction and clings to his mistake, he excludes himself.

132. “Isn’t it up to me to examine myself?”

Yes, but that should be rightly understood. In **1 Corinthians 11:28**, Paul is speaking to members of his *own* congregation. He is not speaking to visitors from churches with different confessions. Furthermore, to examine yourself means to compare what you believe in your heart to what is taught by the church and Holy Scripture. If you disagree with what the church publicly confesses, you must reconcile that difference

before receiving communion.

133. **“A pastor can’t look into my heart and see what I believe. Who is he to withhold communion from me?”**

This is true: No human can see faith in another’s heart. And this is precisely why the pastor *must* speak to and examine people before giving them the Lord’s Supper. Also, the pastor is the pastor of the congregation, sent by God, and entrusted with the care of souls. God has called the pastor “a steward of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1).

134. **“If the pastor withholds communion from me, isn’t he judging me? Doesn’t the Bible say we shouldn’t judge one another?”**

The answer to both questions is "yes." First, the pastor is a steward of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1). The Lord's Supper is not his own, but the Lord's. He is only a steward. Because of this, he must give an account for all the actions done as a pastor (Hebrews 13:17). So, when the pastor withholds the Lord's Supper from you, it is because he doesn't know your confession or because your confession doesn't agree with Holy Scripture. Second, **Matthew 7** says, "Judge not, that you be not judged." These words don't mean Christians can never point out an error or call one another to repentance with the Word of God. Instead, the point of the text is this: You will be judged with the measure with which you judge. If you judge someone unfairly, God will judge you unfairly. In this text, Christ calls us away from hypocrisy and to honest self-examination. Faithfulness to Holy Scripture is a requirement for all who receive the Lord's Supper, and we hold our pastor and every member to this same standard.

135. **“Are you saying that I’m not ‘good enough’ to receive communion?”**

No one is “good enough” to receive Communion. But God does not give us the Lord’s Supper on account of our works

but our confession of faith. Closed Communion is not about ensuring only “good” people receive Communion. On the contrary, Closed Communion ensures that only those who confess their unworthiness and sin receive the Lord’s Supper. When the pastor gives the Lord’s Supper to someone, he is not saying that this person is “good enough.” Instead, he is saying that he has heard this person’s confession of sin and confession of faith in Christ. Preparation and examination before Communion are not ways to test how “good” you are, but to test what you confess. How willing are you to confess your sins and repent of and abandon false teachings? How willing are you to cling to Scripture alone and receive the forgiveness of sins? That is the point of Closed Communion.

136. “Are you saying that I’m not a Christian, and that I’m going to hell, then?”

You may be a Christian or not, but we won’t know unless we first talk to one another. This point of Closed Communion is to learn what you believe, teach, and confess *before* assuming we agree. You may indeed be a Christian, but this doesn’t mean you are well-prepared to receive the Lord’s Supper. However, just because you are not ready to receive the Lord’s Supper doesn’t mean you are not a Christian or are damned. The pastor doesn’t commune infants either, but that doesn’t mean they are damned. It simply means they are unprepared to receive the Lord’s Supper. The truth is that only unbelief condemns, yet divisions are divisions. These lead to broken communion fellowship. When the pastor doesn’t commune you, it’s for one of three reasons: 1) He doesn’t know you, 2) he knows you confess something contrary to God’s Word, 3) he knows you are impenitent by your words and behavior.

137. “Am I right in saying that don’t want me to commune with you?”

No. The pastor and the congregation’s goal is for you to commune with us! We want to be of one mind, spirit, and

truth as we partake of the same Body and Blood of Christ. However, this requires conversation. And conversation takes time. We invite *all people* to make the same confession we do. However, if you don't want to, please understand that you reject *our* invitation to commune together.

138. “This sounds unwelcoming and unloving.”

We understand that our faithfulness to God's Word has led many to call us unwelcoming and unloving (**Matthew 5:11**). But that does not dissuade us from holding to God's Word. Even more, in light of **1 Corinthians 11**, Closed Communion is the most loving thing a pastor can do: To keep a Christian from spiritual harm. Ironically, Open and Close Communion are unloving since these practices lead people into spiritual guilt, sin, and judgment.

139. “Won't people misinterpret what you're saying?”

Unfortunately, yes. But love disciplines. And our faith in God's Word and our love for our neighbor moves us to practice Closed Communion. We will endure whatever persecution and slander because a disciple is not above his Master (**Luke 6:40**). We will never trade the priceless gift of our unity in communion for worldly acceptance.

140. “Can members of this church commune at other churches?”

It depends. We only commune with churches that we have complete doctrinal agreement with. Speaking with your pastor before receiving communion at another church is best. Talking with the congregation pastor before going to communion is also best. However, we do not commune at churches with differing confessions, that is, churches that teach or tolerate false doctrine. As a general rule of thumb, do not commune if you are unsure about what a church believes, teaches, and confesses.

141. “What if I believe what your church teaches, but belong to another denomination?”

That is a good start! If you believe we agree, speak with the pastor. In **Matthew 10:32**, Jesus tells us not to keep our confession private but to make our confession before the church. A true confession upholds Scripture and refutes false doctrine. That means that the pastor will help guide you in leaving your other denomination, making a public confession in the church, and publicly announcing to the church that you are united with us in doctrine before receiving the Lord’s Supper.

142. “How should I talk to my non-Lutheran friends, family, and coworkers about Communion?”

Speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:15**). Don’t shun or ignore them because they are not Lutheran. Tell them the great comfort and joy which the Lord’s Supper brings. Explain that because of **1 Corinthians 11**, the Church cares for and loves them. Give them resources. Direct them to the pastor if you have trouble finding words. Pray that the Lord open their ears and hearts to hear and believe His Word and to cling to His promises.

Take these comforting words to heart: “Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear for them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.” (**1 Peter 3:13-17**)