

## THE HOLY TRINITY

From [www.ELCA.org/questions/Results.asp?recid=28](http://www.ELCA.org/questions/Results.asp?recid=28)

### God's three faces

While not a biblical term, The Trinity represents the crystallization of New Testament teaching. In writing his first letter to the Corinthians in about A.D. 55, just two decades after Christ's death and resurrection, St. Paul correlates Spirit, Lord and God (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). There is a similar correlation in the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:13 and in the trinitarian baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19.

The church's confession of faith originated as a baptismal formula. "In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit asserts that God reveals himself in a threefold manner because he is a triune God. The doctrine is founded on the events of revelation in which the living God has disclosed himself to the world and manifested his determination to establish communion with humankind" (Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church).

### Creation, redemption, reconciliation

"When the church, on the basis of the prophetic and apostolic witness, confesses one God it confesses its faith that the creator at the beginning of time and the re-creator at the end and the redeemer at the center of time is one God. And again, when the church, in obedience to the same witness, worships this one God by three distinct names, it recognizes and acknowledges the difference between creation, reconciliation, and redemption, and it confesses in the one God the three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church).

### God as God is

ELCA Lutherans believe that God reveals who God really is to us. Therefore the Christian church must confess its faith in the essential Trinity. God is one God, revealed in three persons.

Of the Godhead Article 1 of the

Augsburg Confession says, "We unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the Council of Nicea, that there is one divine essence which is called and which is God, eternal, incorporated, indivisible, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. Yet there are three persons, of the same essence and power, who are also co-eternal: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The ELCA, together with the other 135 Lutheran World Federation\* member churches, therefore, are Trinitarian churches, understanding that God has chosen to reveal God's self in triune fashion so that we might better know, understand and witness to God's activity in the world.

\* *Lutheran World Federation Churches span 76 countries, with approximately 65,388,000 members*

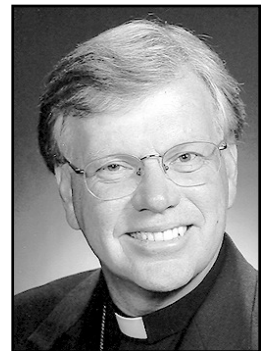
## FEATURED REFERENCES

- Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon, 1976
- The Encyclopedia of The Lutheran Church, Augsburg, 1965

## MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

*This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.*

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." MATTHEW 28:19



## ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 132,000 baptized people in 184 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

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