



‘The Little Lutheran Church That Stood’ – Q&A’s about the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

Q: *What can you tell me about CALC’s roots?*

A: CALC was birthed in the early 1990s by a group of Lutheran lay people and clergy who desired to keep central in their faith the authority of Scripture. Today, as then, CALC provides a “home” for Biblically-faithful Canadian Lutherans. In June 1994, through an Act of Parliament CALC was granted its Canadian federal incorporation and associated charitable status.

Q: *Tell me what CALC teaches and believes?*

A: CALC is a “confessional church” which means that its members and member congregations subscribe to written statements of what CALC believes, teaches and confesses (see Appendix I). Central to CALC’S teaching is the ultimate authority of the Scriptures. Further, central to God’s written word is the saving work of Jesus Christ which becomes paramount for our faith and life. Our commitment above all is to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died and rose again to save us from sin, death and the devil. It is through Jesus’ death and resurrection and by his grace that we are in fellowship with God. We are called then to spread this good news to the “nations”.

Q: *What is CALC’s mission?*

A: CALC is a community of independent congregations living together.

The Word of God has created us,

The Word of God sustains us,

The Word of God redeems us.

As believers we are servants of each other,

As believers we share the burdens of each other,

Like Jesus did for us at the cross.

As one we proclaim Jesus Christ into the world.

CALC is a federally-chartered church body formed to unite, serve, equip, encourage and empower congregations and individuals who share a common belief that:

- *The Holy Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God.*
- *Our faith and life is rooted in and is shaped by the Holy Bible and our Lutheran Confessions.*
- *Our mission is found in Christ’s Great Commission: His call to us to be His disciples and make others His disciples.*

We believe that Christ’s Great Commission is lived out in the local congregation, yet, each congregation is a part of the greater Body of Christ and naturally seeks union with

other congregations in order to more effectively fulfill its mission. Our Association seeks to equip and empower congregations through:

- the establishment of ministry standards so that pastors and other leaders in the church can be identified, their call affirmed, and they can be trained, educated, installed, ordained, mentored, supported, enriched and encouraged.
- the provision of resources and facilitation of events which permit congregations and/or their pastors to gather for worship, Christian education, mutual support and encouragement;
- the creation of a network among congregations, individuals, other church bodies and Christian organizations so that information and resources may be shared and those who are connected are inspired to partner in the proclamation of the Gospel in new and exciting ways.

Q: *Where is CALC headquartered?*

A: CALC nominally has its headquarters in Kamloops, B.C. (functionally at Grace Lutheran Church, Kelowna, B.C.) Thus, along with the ELCIC and Lutheran Church-Canada (LC-C), CALC is one of three solely Canadian-based Lutheran denominations.

Q: *How many congregations are there presently in CALC?*

A: Currently there are 33 congregations: BC (6): St. Andrew’s, Kamloops; Grace, Kelowna; Martin Luther, Vancouver; Basel Hakka Chinese, Vancouver; Vancouver Chinese Lutheran, Vancouver; Mount Calvary, Mission. AB (16): Christ, Sexsmith; Journeys, Grande Prairie; St. Peter’s, Cochrane; Peace, Wainwright; Sharon, Irma; Golden Valley, Viking; Bardo, Tofield; Immanuel, Stony Plain; Emmaus, Edmonton; Salem, Kingman; Trondhjem, Round Hill; Calvary, Wetaskiwin; Asker, Ponoka; Victory, Bethel Lutheran, Marwayne; Faith Lutheran, Calgary; Medicine Hat. SK (3): Trinity, Leader; St. John’s, Preeceville; Immanuel, Parkside. MB (1): Christ, Morden. ON (7): Faith, Toronto; Resurrection, Pembroke; Good Shepherd, Toronto; All Saint, Ottawa; St. Matthew’s, Cornwall; St. Peter’s, Sullivan; Goodwood Uxbridge Lutheran; Goodwood. Thus, CALC fits among the ten relatively smaller Lutheran denominations currently active in Canada (see table below).

Lutheran Denominations Active in Canada	Congregations
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)	594
Lutheran Church–Canada (LC-C)	312
Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)	33
North American Lutheran Church (NALC)	22
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod–Canada (WELS)	16
LC–MS English District*	13
Church of the Lutheran Brethren - Canada (CLB–Canada)	10
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations–Canada (AFLC)	9
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	9
Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (ALCA)	4
Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC)	2
Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR)	1

* A non-geographical synod of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS).

- Q. *What are CALC's administrative costs?***
A. As there are no salaried employees in CALC's National Office, the administrative costs are minimal and primarily related to out-of-pocket expenses. CALC endeavours to be a lean organization focussing on growing the mission through church plants and providing support for the ministry needs of its local parishes as identified through CALC's national conventions.
- Q. *Under CALC, who owns the congregational property and building?***
A: As per Article 2.2.2 of CALC's Constitution, "The Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations has no claim to a local congregation's property".
- Q: *What is CALC's position with respect to the ordination of women to the pastoral office?***
A: Men and women may become pastors.
- Q: *What is CALC's policy concerning who may participate in Holy Communion?***
A: CALC practices "open communion", that is, Lutherans from other church bodies as well as other Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion in CALC churches.
- Q: *Who can be called to be a pastor to CALC congregations?***
A: CALC has three classes of pastors, namely, "pastors of this Association" (serving in parish ministry), "pastors in extended ministry" (serving in non-parish ministry) and "pastors *emeriti*". According to *The Book of Concord* (Kolb & Wengert, pages 340-341), "...it is necessary for the church to retain the right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. This right is a gift bestowed exclusively on the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church." Accordingly, CALC tries to minimize the denominational constraints placed upon congregations as to who they can call, while, at the same time, balancing that freedom with mechanisms in place, such as a Pastoral Review Panel, to help congregations find Scripturally-grounded, solidly Lutheran, pastors who are held accountable to uphold CALC's Confession of Faith.
- Q: *How does CALC train its pastors?***
A: Given its small size, CALC does not have a seminary of its own. However, CALC does not necessarily consider that a limitation as that allows CALC's congregations to spread their nets wider to find a pastor aligned with CALC's Confession of Faith. As well, in cooperation with the Institute of Lutheran Theology this has opened up the opportunity for CALC to introduce a new innovative program for pastoral preparation – The Shepherd's Pathway – to meet the diverse needs of CALC's congregations, particularly smaller, rural congregations.
- Q. *What are the financial implications of joining CALC?***
A. Membership in CALC imposes no financial obligations on a congregation. The Association depends entirely on contributions from congregations and individuals. We suggest giving a portion of benevolence dollars to the general fund of CALC to help pay for the National Office's administrative expenses, conventions, and expenses associated with supporting the ministry of our congregations. Additionally, CALC currently has two

restricted funds available for direct contribution, a *Church Extension Fund* (Grants from this fund are made for two primary purposes: (1) planting new mission congregations and (2) revitalizing and renewing existing CALC congregations a *Gathering Fund* (To maximize attendance at CALC's two annual gatherings, the Pastors' Retreat and the General Convention, this fund will provide financial support for travel, where required, by delegates to the General Convention and CALC pastors to the Pastors' Retreat.) and a *Pastoral Formation Fund* (This fund supports CALC's efforts to provide for faithful Lutheran theological education and development for its pastors and prospective pastors).

Q. *Does CALC address social issues?*

A. CALC views the congregation as the primary expression of the church and generally does not speak for its members. However, in circumstances where the truth of God's Word is being consistently challenged, the association may decide to speak to the issue. For example, according to CALC's *Policy on Marriage*, "In accordance with our confession of faith, we define marriage as being between one man and one woman".

Q: *How is CALC governed?*

A: CALC's *National Council* is composed of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary as officers along with the members of the *Board of Elders* and the *Board of Trustees*. The current President of CALC is Pastor Ed Skutshek, Grace Lutheran, Kelowna (elected in 2009), and Fred Schickedanz, a lay member of St. Peter's, Cochrane, is the Vice-President of CALC (elected in 2009). According to CALC's Constitution, either at least one or both of the positions of President and Vice-President must be held by a lay person. At the present time, none of the members of CALC's National Council are paid employees; participation is on a volunteer basis. The National Council functions as the legislative agency of the Association between General Conventions in order to deal with situations which necessitate action before the next General Convention. Legislative acts by the National Council shall require a majority vote of all its members and must be presented to the next General Convention for review.

The *Board of Elders* is responsible for the leadership and supervision of CALC in all spiritual matters. The Board of Elders is composed of the President of CALC as chair person, the Secretary, and not less than three nor more than nine other members as determined by the General Convention in the year of election.

The *Board of Trustees* is in charge of the general management and business affairs of CALC. The Board of Trustees is composed of the Vice-President of CALC as chair person, the Treasurer, and not less than three nor more than nine other members as determined by the General Convention in the year of election.

The highest constitutional authority delegated by the congregations to CALC shall be vested in the *General Convention*, which shall meet in regular sessions annually (typically the first weekend in November) by call of the President in consultation with the National Council. CALC's Constitution states that one of the limitations on the General Convention's powers is that, "questions involving doctrine shall not be ultimately

determined by vote of the General Convention, but on the basis of the Word of God and the Confessions of the Church”. In keeping with the ‘bottom up’ nature of CALC, before any amendments to CALC’s Constitution and by-laws approved through majority vote at a CALC General Convention become effective they must be ratified through a process whereby three quarters of CALC’s member congregations vote in favour of the amendment.

Contact Us

Anyone wishing further information about CALC or wishing to join, please contact us. Written copies of the Constitution and its by-laws, additional educational and informational materials and copies of our newsletter *Lutheran Connector* are available from the address below. As well, additional information can be found at CALC’s web site www.calc.ca. Our members are available to meet with your congregation to answer any questions and to provide any further information.

Contact us at:

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Appendix I.

CALC's Article 3 – Confession of Faith

1. *The Bible*

The Association accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and joyfully submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of life and faith.

2. *Faith in the Triune God*

The Association is built upon faith in the ever-living Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as revealed in the Holy Scriptures to Whom be the glory for ever and ever (see the three Ecumenical Creeds).

3 *God the Father*

3.1 Almighty God, Creator of the universe, Who formed man in His own image, Who from the beginning loved goodness and hated evil, desires that the children of His creation live in eternal fellowship with Him. We hold to the creation and fall of humanity as described in the first chapters of Genesis, not as myth, but as historic facts.

3.2 Therefore, the Creator gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16) to be the Savior of the world, that people might be set free from the bondage of sin, and become joint heirs with Jesus Christ of eternal life.

4. *Jesus Christ, God's only Son and our Savior*

4.1 At the heart and centre of this faith is confidence in Jesus Christ and love for Him, the Eternal Word of God, true God (only Son of the Father from eternity), and true man (born of the Virgin Mary), and the only Savior of the world.

4.2 The reason for our being the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations is to proclaim salvation solely by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

5. *Dependence upon the Holy Spirit*

We also acknowledge dependence upon the Holy Spirit working solely through the Means of Grace to call unbelievers into saving faith in Jesus Christ, to empower believers to grow in faith, to bestow His gifts for the ministry of the Church locally and universally, to inspire love for one another, and to bring glory to the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church.

6. *Symbols: Basic and Required*

As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, this Association accepts and confesses the following Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members, both congregations and individuals:

- 6.1 The ancient Ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian;
- 6.2 The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

7. ***Book of Concord: Normative***

As further elaboration of and in accordance with these Lutheran Symbols, this Association also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles (including the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope) and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.

8. ***Pure Doctrine***

The Association accepts without reservation these symbolic books of the Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the evangelical Lutheran Church.



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