

Denominational Review

Task Force on Denominational Affiliation

June 8, 2010

Question 1 – What is their statement of faith?

<p>Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)</p>	<p>Creating an alliance of like-minded leaders and churches who are fostering authentic relationships to aggressively advance the kingdom of God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe God has raised up the ARC for a strategic purpose in perilous times: to create an alliance of like-minded leaders and churches free to enter into real friendships, engage in honest dialogue, and experience personal transformation so that we settle for nothing less than doing the works and proclaiming the words of Jesus. • We believe the Lord has given us a mandate to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit so that people might be saved, healed, set free, and empowered to live fully into their God-given destiny. <p>Charismatic</p>
<p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This church confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. • This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation. ○ The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ. ○ The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world. • This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life. • This church accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church. • This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it In faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. • This church accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church. • This church confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.
<p>Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)</p>	<p>By God's blessing, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is committed to being strongly in the Word, Christ-centered and people-sensitive, reaching out boldly with the Gospel, faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and marked by peace and unity in the Lord. The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice; 2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord. <p>The Missouri Synod believes that the Bible is the only standard by which church teachings can be judged. It also holds that the Holy Scripture is explained and interpreted by the Book of Concord—a series of Confessions of faith composed by Lutherans in the 16th century. Missouri Synod pastors and congregations agree to teach in harmony with the Book of Concord <i>because</i> it teaches and faithfully explains the Word of God. The Missouri Synod also teaches Biblical inerrancy, the teaching that Bible is inspired by God and is without error. For this reason, they reject much—if not all—of modern liberal scholarship.</p>

...Question 1 continues on page 3

<p>Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)</p>	<p><i>...Question 1 continued from page 2</i></p> <p>2.01. We believe, teach, and confess the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>2.02. We believe, teach, and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation. b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both law and gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself. c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world. <p>2.03. We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.</p> <p>2.04. We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.</p> <p>2.05. We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.</p> <p>2.06. We believe, teach, and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.</p> <p>2.07. We believe, teach, and confess the gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.</p>
<p>North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core</p>	<p>A community of Lutherans who acknowledge that Scripture is the only and final authority in matters of faith and life, and who accept the Common Confessions as a faithful and trustworthy witness to the Word of God.</p>

Question 2 – What is the organizational structure?

<p>Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)</p>	<p>We are connected. While we are autonomous, we favor interdependence to independence. We enjoy working together for a common cause, and that cause is kingdom advance. Relationships are the unifying cement rather than doctrine. We value who we are for one another, and what we do together grows out of our commitment to one another.</p> <p>We are a network. We are decentralized rather than centralized, flat rather than hierarchical. We believe that one size does not fit all, so we enjoy unity without uniformity, coordination rather than control, and flexibility over rigidity ever time. We like to reward risk-taking and innovation because we don't have all the answers. We trust what God does in a local church. At the same time...</p> <p>The Leadership Team . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casts and refines the ARC's vision • Gives oversight to the ARC, helping maintain theological and ethical integrity • Encourages the networking of ministries for the purpose of strategic mission • Serves as a court of last resort for serious issues that may come up in a congregation or among its leaders, such as financial impropriety, moral failure, or theological issues • Convenes the major network meetings • Weighs congregational and individual applications for partnering with the ARC • Was initially recommended by the ARC Formation Team and affirmed by the ARC members at its Inaugural Gathering on June 3-4, 2002. The ARC Leadership Team chooses its Team Leader. Future members will be recommended by an ARC member and affirmed by unanimous approval of the ARC Leadership Team.
<p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)</p>	<p>The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has interdependent leadership through each of its three expressions—10,000-plus congregations, 65 synods, and one churchwide organization. Each expression works together, under the guidance of the Churchwide Assembly and Church Council, to ensure a strong foundation of leadership that enables faithful proclamation of the gospel and expressive worship, community involvement, open dialogue and a culture of support for our nearly five million members.</p>
<p>Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)</p>	<p>LCMS has a modified congregational polity. Congregations have the right and privilege to make their own decisions about local matters, but as members of the Synod, they also promise to uphold and support the doctrine and practice of the Synod and not act contrary to it. Membership in the Synod is voluntary on the part of congregations.</p> <p>The Synod is governed by the Churches and pastors who meet in convention every three years. They elect a president and vice presidents, a Board of Directors and other officers, who act on behalf of the Synod in between conventions.</p> <p>There are 35 districts, each of which has a District President. Together with the Synod President and Vice Presidents these men make up the "Council of Presidents" which meets about four times a year to discuss theology and how that is carried out in our churches. The District Presidents are under the supervision of the Synod President, and are elected by their districts in district conventions, held every three years.</p> <p>Each district is divided into circuits, which are made of 7-11 congregations, who elect one of the pastors as a circuit counselor. The Circuit Counselor represents the District President in dealing with the local congregations (call meetings, disputes, etc)</p> <p>Congregations operate under a congregational polity for the most part. They are governed by the Voters' assembly which meets at least once a year. Some operate under policy-based governance. Some under a more traditional church council/board structure... or anywhere in between. All congregations must operate under a Constitution and By Laws which have been approved by their District Constitution Committee</p>
<p>Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)</p>	<p>An association of congregations. Congregations have much freedom, and therefore, responsibility. LCMC has a Board of Trustees (general, main responsible board--elected), and a Ministry Board (deals with clergy—appointed). Three full-time and 2 part-time employees. Congregations have at least 2 delegated to the National Gathering. Any constitutional changes must be ratified by the congregation during the year after the vote. Bylaw changes may be rejected by congregations.</p>
<p>North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core</p>	<p>Organizational Structure: It holds to heart the Great Commission of Jesus to, "Make disciples of all nations." It will utilize networked ministries of local congregations and parachurch organizations, rather than the large bureaucracy of a denominational body. It will be governed by convocation of representative delegates from its congregations and it will submit major decisions to congregational ratification. It will stand in continuity with the 2,000 year history of, "The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church."</p>

Question 3 - How do they practice communion and baptism?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	Communion: Open Baptism: Infant Determined by each congregation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	"Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion when they are visiting in the congregations of this church. Infant baptism
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	<p>The LCMS endorses the doctrine of close or closed communion ^[19]—the policy of sharing the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. There is a wide variety of practices within the LCMS.</p> <p>There are some pastors and congregations who practice a pretty “open” communion, allowing all to come who recognize that they receive Jesus’ body and blood with the bread and the wine, and who are sorry for their sins, and trust Jesus’ atoning death for their forgiveness and salvation. (this is not the official LCMS position)</p> <p>There are some pastors and congregations who practice a very closed position on communion, pretty much allowing only members of the congregation to attend (this is NOT the official LCMS position).</p> <p>There are pastors and congregations everywhere in between. Basically, most congregations practice a “close” understanding of communion, whereby other LCMS Lutherans are always welcome, and others who wish to come, need to talk with the pastor first. He would ask them if they understand that they are a sinner and are sorry for their sins, if they trust in Jesus to forgive their sins, if they understand that in communion, they receive Jesus true body and blood with the bread and wine. This is done so that they do not receive the Lord’s Supper to their spiritual harm.</p> <p>There are some pastors and congregations who make it their mission to “police” other pastors and congregations and attempt to make them comply with the official LCMS positions. These tend to be the very strict/”confessional” pastors.</p> <p>BAPTISM – there may be a variety of practices, but this issue does not get some pastors as riled up as the communion practices do. In nearly every case, the church has a baptismal font, used for baptisms. Some might baptize in a lake or other places with water, but that’s usually something special. It’s usually done in a public worship service of the congregation (Sunday am) but in some circumstances, might be done privately at the family’s request.</p>
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	Same as most Lutheran churches with open communion and infant baptism.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	Same as most Lutheran churches with open communion and infant baptism.

Question 4 – What is the role of women?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	Any role, completely open
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	Any role, completely open
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	<p>Women are sisters in Christ, given all the gifts of the Spirit, and should be fully involved in the life of the church. Having said that, there are some limitations the LCMS places on the service of women in the church.</p> <p>Officially, women can hold all human offices of a congregation (church boards, chairman, vice chairman etc). They may vote in the Voters' assembly (since 1969). They may hold the position of elder, as long as that role does not include functions of the pastoral office (since 2004). There are some pastors and congregations who do not agree with these decisions, and urge their congregations not to adopt these, or even to reverse these practices.</p> <p>Officially, women cannot be pastors in the LCMS. See Al Barry's article, http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/wa_ordinationofwomen.pdf, and a variety of theological treatises produced by the synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=515. These are the official position of the LCMS, and congregations are expected to abide by this position.</p>
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	Women and men have the equal roles in the church.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	The NALC will recognize both women and men in the office of ordained clergy.

Question 5 – what are the preferences regarding worship style?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	Charismatic and informal.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	Liturgical traditional to Contemporary. Congregations may determine their own style
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	<p>This is a HUGE question in the LCMS today, along with the communion and women's issues. Officially, there is no proscribed style of worship. The Synod recognizes that there are many forms and styles of music and liturgy, and actually encourages responsible and creative use of these. There is a hymnal published by the synod's publishing house, Concordia Publishing House (Lutheran Service Book). This is used by many congregations, but is not required. The synod does encourage pastors to plan worship with an understanding of the basic liturgical elements which unite us to the holy Christian church throughout the ages. Recently, the Council of Presidents has adopted a wonderful statement on Worship, see http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=15795</p> <p>Many congregations do some alternate styles of worship, from blended to contemporary. A growing number are realizing the need for their worship to be contextually relevant to the community/mission field in which God placed them.</p> <p>Some congregations insist on using the hymnal and liturgy, and believe that the hymnal itself offers enough variety. Unfortunately, many of these pastors also want to proscribe the same liturgical style of worship/liturgical uniformity on other congregations. This is not the position of the LCMS!!!</p>
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	Liturgical traditional to Contemporary. Congregations may determine their own style
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	Liturgical traditional to Contemporary. Traditionally NALC includes the practice of worship in Word and Sacrament, the office of the ministry, a ministry of oversight and the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions and ecumenical creeds. The Creeds and Lutheran Confessions serve as faithful witnesses to the Holy Scriptures.

Question 6 – What is the process for educating and certifying pastors?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	The Master’s Institute (MI) is closely related to the ARC and trains many pastors for the ARC. However, pastors are not required to graduate from MI, and each leader will be encouraged to seek out the best route to his/her own personal preparation for ministry.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	There are 5 steps in the process which include discernment, candidacy, entrance endorsement and approval. One must attend an ELCA or accredited seminary and be approved by the candidacy committee. The Division for Ministry assists the synods and seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in developing and carrying out programs for the identification, preparation and evaluation of candidates for the ordained, consecrated and commissioned ministries of this church.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	<p>There are a variety of ways to educate pastors in the LCMS:</p> <p>Seminary (residential) is the traditional route. 4 years, post-graduate studies which includes one year of vicarage/internship at an assigned parish under the supervision of an experienced pastor. Following the 4th year, the student is granted a Masters of Divinity, and is certified (by the seminary) for ordination and placement into the ministry. IN order to enter the seminary, the prospective student must complete a pre-seminary interview in his home district, and be recommended by the District Pastor, as well as by his own pastor.</p> <p>There are some non-formal methods of seminary education as well:</p> <p>EIIT (Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology) is a program for immigrants whose heart-language is not English. Following an interview with the pre-seminary committee and District President, the District President recommends him for the program. He does ministry in his current location (maybe planting an immigrant church or working in an immigrant ministry in another church), probably works at a job to gain income for self/family, and takes studies on-line under a mentor assigned by the District President. (a 4-year program)</p> <p>SMP (see http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=13117 for official docs). This program is for English-speaking men who take pastor training classes on-line under the supervision of a local mentor. The program allows them to be involved in local ministry while they take seminary classes. This program has a variety of steps... after two years, the man is ordained, after another series of classes he may be eligible to take a call to other ministries other than that specific one he currently serves. After another series of classes (and seminary residential period), he may earn his M Div. Prior to enrolling, there are certain pre-requisites which must be met.</p> <p>There are a few other options, but the above are most common.</p> <p>Colloquy program, for pastors of other denominations who wish to become LCMS pastors. First step is to meet with the District President. He will either recommend for the program, or not. It involves a district interview, and the assignment of a mentor, who will work with the pastor on understanding LCMS teaching and history, in preparation for a Colloquy interview by the Synodical committee in St. Louis. This mentoring process takes about a year. During that time, he may serve a congregation, with the District Pres’ approval and licensing. If he is approved by that committee, he will be certified for LCMS ministry. See Synod website, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=7612</p> <p>All of these require the involvement and support of the local District President.</p>
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	<p>Congregations may issue a pastoral call to whomever they choose. This may be a certified call or a contract call, as defined by our Ministry Standards. The association expects pastors and congregations to abide by our governing documents and Statement of Faith. A call packet is available to guide congregations through the process, however, responsibility for performing due diligence lies with the congregation. Standards for a Certified Call in LCMC Candidates will subscribe to the LCMC Statement of Faith, if related to a district the district’s ministry standards, state and federal laws and expectations of their endorsing agent. Procedures for a Certified Call in LCMC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates will have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and a master of divinity degree from an accredited theological school or its equivalent. 2. If possible, a mentoring pastor assigned by a ministry committee will develop a relationship with the student while that student is in seminary. 3. When appropriate, psychological testing may be administered. 4. For students or graduates of non-Lutheran seminaries, the ministry committee will decide what additional education should be assigned. 5. Candidates will have a year of internship/residency or its equivalent. This can be a regular seminary internship, an internship/residency arranged by a ministry committee, or an equivalent experience, such as previous supervised work in a congregation. 6. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) may be selectively required. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>...Question 6 continues on page 9</i></p>

	<p>...<i>Question 6 continued from page 8</i></p> <p>7. Candidates will participate in a certification interview with a ministry committee. Upon completion of the certification interview and approval for a certified call, the LCMC office will be informed of the candidate's availability for call.</p> <p>8. Clergy on the roster of another domination, who wish to become listed as LCMC clergy, can apply to the colloquy process in LCMC.</p> <p>9. To have a certified call, a candidate must have a letter of call from a congregation.</p> <p>10. Upon Completion of the above, the candidate can be ordained/installed.</p>
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	Theological Education – NALC “will work with existing Lutheran and non-Lutheran seminaries and with newer theological education initiatives such as the institute of Lutheran Theology.” Education that has its goal of being centered in the Word and the Sacraments. The NALC will develop relationships with theological institutions and will work to establish programs of confessional seminary training for clergy, as well as leadership training for all members of the NALC.

Question 7 – How are resources (educational, etc.) made available?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	Each church selects their own
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	Augsburg Fortress provides pastors, educators, worship planners and members of the ELCA with products and services that communicate the Gospel, enhance faith and enrich the life of the Christian community from a Lutheran perspective. Congregations are also able to select other items/resources available from any source and/or publisher. Items are made available at the discretion of the pastor, council or other members.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	There are many on-line resources, available simply for downloading. You might need some direction to find them. Others are available from Concordia Publishing House. The local districts have some resources available, depending on the needs of the congregations or workers, as does Synod itself. If we're talking financial, there's not much available; occasional grants, mission grants, some educational grants. Contact the District Office.
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	We have many educational resources that our congregations use. The congregation gets to chose their resources and from which publisher.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	NALC will provide resources for ministry and mission to congregations and individuals that can be used in their own setting as follows: 1. evangelization and new ministry development. 2. educational resources for persons at all ages and stages of faith formation and life. 3. programmatic aids for children's ministry, youth ministry, men's and women's ministries and other specialized ministries. 4. connection to existing congregational ministry resources that are biblically and confessionally sound.

Question 8 – How are youth ministries supported?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	The NALC will recognize both women and men in the office of ordained clergy.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	The local congregation supports its own youth program; many circuits have churches that work together in a variety of ways. Our Concordia University in St. Paul has some support (programs, events) for youth The District has a Director of Christian Ed cluster for DCEs who usually work with youth. Synod sponsors a huge national youth gathering, this year, it's in New Orleans. About 30,000 youth attend. There are some great online resources too, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2093
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	LCMC has a youth event every year and we encourage connections among youth leaders. Many summer camps are used by many LCMC churches.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	NALC and Lutheran CORE will provide resources and ministry and missions links to congregations. Resources to support Christian education, ministry to children and youth, theological education, men's and women's ministries, and the serving of human need will be made available along with support for global mission.

Question 9 – What is available to women?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	There are a wide variety of opportunities from the WELCA, stewardship. Various topics include: “ Growing in Faith , Affirming Our Gifts , Supporting One Another in Our Callings , Engaging in Ministry and Action , Promoting Healing and Wholeness ,” etc.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	National and local women's organization is the Lutheran Women's Missionary League or Lutheran Women in Mission, http://www.lwml.org/ The local (MN south) website is http://www.mnslwml.org/ These women sponsor mission projects, gather for Bible studies and topics of interest, get involved in mission activities, leadership training etc.
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	Congregations decide what their women's organization will look like and where they are going to get Bible study material, etc. Recognition of women as ordained clergy.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	Recognition of women as ordained clergy. NALC intends to adopt the standards of the ELCA Statement of Visions and Expectations.

Question 10 – What emphases are there as regards evangelism and mission?

<p>Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)</p>	<p>Ministry to Forgotten Ones - The ministry of Jesus includes: Feed the poor. Clothe the naked. Heal the sick. Cast out demons. Kingdom ministry touches the poor and homeless, the outcast and abandoned, the disenfranchised and marginalized. As we serve the forgotten ones, we recognize that we need them as much as they need us.</p> <p>We are missional. We believe in the mission, not just missions, whether that means going across the street or across the ocean. We are here for those who aren't yet in. The gifts of the Spirit are for those who need them—out there!</p>
<p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)</p>	<p>ELCA church wide ministries that support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous. It assists congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach. Among its responsibilities are supporting discipleship, stewardship, and lifelong learning; increasing awareness about the centrality of prayer; starting and renewing congregations; and implementing the ELCA evangelism strategy and pertinent portions of all ethnic-specific strategies.</p> <p>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...</p> <p>Marked by the sign of the cross we are sent to be an evangelizing church; Praying, Preparing and Renewing Leaders, Teaching Disciples, Starting and Renewing Congregations, we model and invite others to emulate the life of Christ by internalizing the Great Commission, a hope for our broken world.</p>
<p>Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)</p>	<p>This is a strong component of the LCMS and our MNS District. The Ablaze movement has been a powerful force to energize and focus congregations and individuals, as well as the Synod, in its mission task, see the national website, http://www.lcms.org/pages/default.asp?NavID=5247 With the understanding that planting new churches is the best way to reach new people, the Synod has adopted goals of 2000 new churches in North America (plus 3000 worldwide) by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Also 2000 revitalized congregations in North America, as well as sharing the message of Jesus with 1 million unreached or unconnected people. See the website for details. In addition, the goal is to add new missionaries to the international mission field, and support mission work world-wide. For this effort, we have made great strides in working with partner Lutheran churches all around the world. All great, energizing stuff, if congregations get on board. It is a powerful vision of what the Synod should be about!</p> <p>The district has goals of 130,000 new disciples (people prayed for and connected to Jesus), 50 new congregations, 50 revitalized churches and 250 new ministries. We have aligned our staffing and programs to meet these goals. We have fairly extensive cross-cultural mission work within the district, as our district has huge numbers of immigrants. We also have a significant Lutheran school ministry, a church camp, and more.</p> <p>While Ablaze is a powerful spirit-driven movement in the LCMS, there is a vocal minority of pastors who have been very critical of the effort. They have done everything from ignoring it, to being activists against the movement, because they claim it is a pietistic, anti-Lutheran movement, dangerous to true Lutheran theology. As a result, the Ablaze movement has had mixed reviews/results overall, and attempts to fight it continue. Nearly all of the larger, growing, evangelistic churches have endorsed it, and are involved in some way, or at least support its goals, and are involved in working toward the goals in ways that are appropriate for their contexts.</p>
<p>Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)</p>	<p>Lutheran Congregations IN MISSION FOR CHRIST! Lots of new mission starts, lots of missionary support options, encouragement to be involved with local missions as well. Examples: Lutheran World Relief, World Mission Prayer League, etc. Membership in the association 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 LCMC to help pay for communication, conventions, legal support, and expenses associated with coordinating the activities of our congregations. Additionally, LCMC has two restricted funds available for direct contribution: the Seminary Debt Relief Fund, and the Mission Congregation Fund.</p>
<p>North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core</p>	<p>The primary mission is to “make disciples of all nations” Matt: 28. Our shared ministry will engage in and support global missions. Particular emphasis will be placed on working with and through existing parachurch organizations such as World Mission Prayer League and the Eastern European Missions Network.</p>

Question 11 – What are the standards in regard to sexuality and family?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	Each congregation has the choice whether to bless same sex unions. The ELCA supports families.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	The LCMS is conservative with regards to social issues (abortion, marriage, family, sexuality, etc). Synod and District conventions regularly endorse Scriptural, conservative positions with great unity. See the Synod website for details on those issues and more. Pres Kieschnick on traditional marriage are homosexuality, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=9728 Official statements of the Synod, from The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=503
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	Marriage and Family- “We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice the sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	Marriage and Family- “We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice the sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.:

Question 12 – How do they welcome and speak God’s Word to those whose opinions differ from theirs?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	The church is open to those with opinions that differ from theirs and will continue to spread the Word of God to all. God’s truth is the ultimate truth, but there is room for dialogue with all.
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	This depends entirely on the pastor of the local congregations. Some are strident and rigid, and do not give a winsome witness. There are quite a few of these who feel their role is to preserve a pure church no matter who they offend or turn away. Others welcome the conversation, the dialog, and are willing to listen and learn. They believe that their role is to welcome others, share honestly in love, and trust that the Gospel is powerful enough to take care of itself. While there are certain standards (theological and practice) to which we adhere and cannot compromise (integrity of the Word – inerrant, inspired, etc, and the teachings of the Christian Church) we are always open to give a genuine, loving witness.
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	“We speak the truth in love” as the bible says. There are always differing opinions. We circle back to the Bible for direction on issues and guidance for our behavior.
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, God uses us to speak his Word and build his kingdom. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.

Question 13 – What is their theology?

Alliance of Renewal Churches (ARC)	While we minister in many churches around the country and around the world across denominational lines, we honor and embrace our Reformation theological heritage: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone. We also recognize the Lutheran confessions as including an historic, faithful summary of the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	<p>Lutherans believe in the Triune God. God created and loves all of creation -- the earth and the seas and all of the world's inhabitants. We believe that God's Son, Jesus Christ, transforms lives through his death on the cross and his new life, and we trust that God's Spirit is active in the world.</p> <p>We are part of God's unfolding plan. When we gather for worship, we connect with believers everywhere. When we study the Bible or hear God's word in worship, we are drawn more deeply into God's own saving story.</p> <p>The convictions shared by Christians from many different traditions are expressed in statements of belief called creeds.</p> <p>God's abundant revolutionary and exceptional love through Jesus Christ also known as grace.</p>
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)	<p>This is a question that could take volumes, and indeed volumes have been written. Just see the huge pile of writings on the synods websites, noted above. I will answer simply:</p> <p>The source and norm of all our theology is the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments), which are the inspired, inerrant Word of God, and the final and ultimate source and norm for our faith and life.</p> <p>I recommend the Commission on Theology and Church Relations website (above) for documents on some specific doctrines</p> <p>The Lutheran Confessions (http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=522) are an accurate exposition and explanation of Scriptures.</p> <p>On the Synod Website, you will also find an on-line version of the Christian Encyclopedia, http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/ - This is a wealth of official information, both theological and historical.</p> <p>The FAQ page also contains useful and interesting info on a variety of theological topics, http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=71</p>
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)	<p>We are rooted and grounded In the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions -- Our association is firmly committed to accepting the normative authority of the Bible. We reject the notion that science, personal experience, tradition, or other human endeavors have equal footing with the Bible. We are certainly aware that these endeavors contribute to our conversations and deliberations, but the Bible must be our final authority in matters of faith and practice. We also believe that the Lutheran Confessions offer us accurate interpretations of the Biblical witness and we commit ourselves to being guided by them in our life together as an association. . . . We are working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations. LCMC has one primary mission: that of sharing the life giving Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are focused on starting congregations in this country, supporting Missionaries around the world, and raising up and training leaders to serve Christ and His church. LCMC is committed to knowing Jesus and making Jesus known. The association is dedicated to helping member congregations live out this mission.</p>
North American Lutheran Church (NALC) –formed from Core	<p>NALC states, "We believe and proclaim that the Good News, centered in Christ, clearly is revealed in the written Word of God, the canonical Holy Scriptures." 2 Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful in teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." NALC goes on to state that, "We believe and proclaim that the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran Confessions provide faithful and trustworthy witnesses to the Word of God. The Confessions call the Lutheran community to a reforming ministry based on the Word of God within the one body of Christ."</p>

Links for each denomination:

Alliance for Renewal Churches:

www.allianceofrenewalchurches.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

www.elca.org

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod:

www.lcms.org

Lutheran Churches in Ministry for Christ:

www.lcmc.net

North American Lutheran Church:

www.lutherancore.org/papers/new_vision.shtml

- Link to the Common Confession:
 - http://www.lutherancore.org/com_conf.shtml