



The following publications about the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations are available:

- Standing Fast in Freedom
- Welcome to Biblical Lutheranism
- Free and Living Congregations
- A New Springtime
- Roots of Freedom
- God's Word Our Witness
- George Sverdrup: Champion of the Free Congregation
- A Biblical Response to the Question of the Ordination of Women
- An Introduction to the AFLC and Its Ministries (DVD)

For more information on these publications please contact the AFLC at:

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THE ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

The purpose, form and
function of the AFLC



The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
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What is the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations?

Venture of Faith

1 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a venture of faith. It is an attempt to build an effective and orderly Christian fellowship with a minimum of human organization. It is an experiment in extreme ecclesiastical democracy and decentralization. It is a searching test of faith in the power of the Spirit of God.

Common Cause, Common Tasks

2 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a fellowship of independent Lutheran congregations bound together by the bond of loyalty to a common cause and common tasks. It is a specific and direct rejection of the superior authority of every ecclesiastical organization above the congregation. It is an attempt to test seriously the uniting power of Christian love and cooperation. It is a call to a spiritual pilgrimage with no endeavor to organize the pilgrims into the rigid battalions of an army.

Priesthood of Believers

3 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a cooperative venture in building Lutheran congregations by means of a dominant emphasis neither upon organization nor upon the intricacies of doctrine but upon living and personal Christian experience. It is an attempt to carry out in everyday practice the Reformation principle of the universal priesthood of believers. It is a concrete expression of revolt against ritualism and formalism, and of the desire to nourish the spiritual life in utter simplicity upon the Word of God. It is an effort to provide orderly channels for the cultivation of the laity's personal witness for Christ, both in public and in private. Yet it cherishes the ordered ministry of consecrated and trained men, and the noble heritage of Christian worship, that its people may know themselves to be one with Christ in all the ages.

Church Organization

4 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is not a synod. It does not have the authority, save by consent of its congregations, to unite with Lutheran synods in effort to bring about an organically unified Lutheran Church. It is one of the smaller Lutheran groups, standing deeply in need of the varied contributions of other and larger bodies if it is to do its work effectively in its various fields of endeavor. It is an effort to achieve not a specific form of Church organization but a high quality of Christian life, in the faith that true spiritual life will tend to mold for itself a fitting form of organization. It was conceived to be a kind of ecclesiastical and spiritual leaven in American Lutheranism.

Dream Becomes Reality

5 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was born of a dream of spiritual power and vitality; yet it has been able to carry on even when its power and spiritual vitality seemed at lower ebb. It was launched under a great and inspiring leadership in a period of intense struggle; yet it has not perished when led through calmer seas and by spirits less flaming. It has been ridiculed as small, impractical and visionary; yet those who know it best know that none of these words is a fatal indictment. It has been accused of "separatism"; yet it has throughout all of its history been earnestly in favor of full spiritual cooperation. Its dissolution has long and often been foretold; but it still lives. The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is an attempt to translate a high spiritual vision into reality, even at the cost of being suspected of turning reality into a dream.

Contribution to the Lutheran Church

6 The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is sincerely grateful for the work of other Lutherans; yet it desires to have its own peculiar share in the mighty work and witness of the Lutheran Church. It does not seek to pass judgment on the relative contribution to Lutheranism of groups small or large; it earnestly seeks to be kept truly humble because of the imperfection of its achievements, and rightly proud because of the greatness of its heritage. Limited in number so that not even its name is known in many Lutheran circles of our country, and conscious that it will probably never be regarded as "successful" in the eyes of the world, it still believes in the continuing urgency of its message. Willing if necessary to find its success in seeming failure, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is committed, together with others of like mind, to the struggle for true congregational life in the Lutheran Church in America.

Bernhard M. Christensen
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This brochure was originally published under the title, "What is the Lutheran Free Church?" All references to "Lutheran Free Church" have been changed to "Association of Free Lutheran Congregations." The Lutheran Free Church (LFC) was the predecessor to the AFLC and the AFLC was founded upon the LFC's Fundamental Principles.