

# “Who Are We?” & “What Do We Stand for?”

## Historical Continuity with the American Lutheran Church

Prior to 1988 there were three major Lutheran church bodies in America: Lutheran Church in America (LCA), Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LC-MS) and American Lutheran Church (ALC). On January 1, 1988 the LCA, the ALC and another smaller church body merged to form the largest Lutheran church body in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Twelve ALC congregations chose not to enter into the ELCA merger and prior to the merger, on November 7, 1987, formed their own Lutheran church body, The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC). The pastors and congregations held firmly that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and they saw the ELCA moving further away from that foundation. From 1987 to 2009, The AALC has grown from 12 congregations to 78 congregations and formed their own seminary, American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS), which is now located on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

## Relationship with Other churches

For many decades, many of the Lutheran church bodies cooperated on social ministry ventures. In 1969 the LC-MS and the ALC declared formal Altar and Pulpit Fellowship, where members could commune at each other's altars and pastors could preach in each other's pulpits. However, problems soon developed; in December 1970 the ALC set aside the Scriptural understanding of the pastoral ministry by ordaining women as pastors. At that point the partnership between the ALC and the LC-MS began to disintegrate, until fellowship was broken in 1981.

With the formation of The AALC in 1987, however, there was renewed interest in reestablishing fellowship. In 1989 representatives from The AALC and the LC-MS began informal talks exploring the possibility of Altar and Pulpit Fellowship. In 2007 the two church bodies at their national conventions voted to formally declare that they were substantially in doctrinal agreement and established Altar and Pulpit Fellowship.

Today The AALC continues in the proud conservative ALC tradition to offer a viable alternative to Lutheran congregations across America who find themselves unable to feel comfortable in either of the larger Lutheran church bodies.

## The Future

We offer a Biblical, Christian foundation for congregations and our mission to the world. We theologically train pastors forged for 21<sup>st</sup> century ministry. The AALC strives to confess the Christian faith in an unstable world, remaining evangelical and Christ-focused, being neither partisan nor sectarian. The AALC is committed to making disciples of all nations. We invite you to join us on this adventure in faith.

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