

Why Do We Go To a CLC Church?

The question:

During the course of our lives here on earth, we encounter an extraordinary variety of religions and churches from which to choose. Compared to most church bodies in this country, the CLC has very few members, little money, and for the most part, retains a traditional style of worship. The question often comes up: Why do we go to a CLC church? This conversation most likely comes up between family members, friends, and co-workers, as those are the people with whom we most commonly and extensively talk. Yet, even around the people with whom we are most comfortable, it can be difficult to express our faith, and why we believe what we believe. With regard to some of these questions, we have compiled a survey of Berean members asking them to share their thoughts on why being members of a church, Berea, and the Church of the Lutheran Confession is important to them.

Survey Results:

The survey asked members a series of questions: Why they go to church? What spiritual benefits does God supply me with at my church? Why do I specifically go to Berea? Why is it important for me to profess my faith with the Church of the Lutheran Confession? What personal/spiritual hurdles have led me and kept me at my CLC church?

Many answers were given to these questions. There was an overall underlining appreciation for the preaching of God's unadulterated law and gospel found in the Bible taught in truth and purity. Being joined together with like mind believers as the Lord commanded; **"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."** 1 Corinthians 1:10 The exercising of fellowship with other like mind believers is encouraging, and leads to growth in the knowledge of God's love and grace.

The gift of strong Christian relationships was also brought up many times. Relationships that can be counted on in times of spiritual distress, as the Lord says, **"Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."** 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Fellow Bereans hold each other accountable to follow the narrow path to salvation, especially at a critical time the history of the world when we are so bombarded daily with all the inputs fighting against the Lord. The body of believers at Berea is a help to remind them of the truth as they also help to watch out for their souls.

Many were thankful of the blessing of Christian Education. One of the most notable benefits that members said they received at Berea was the education of their children from caring and faithful called-workers. They recall that they were introduced to the true faith at a very early age, which has equipped them by the power of the Holy Spirit to hold to their faith while living in a secular world. As the Lord says, **“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”** Proverbs 22:6

A number of members expressed their thankfulness for being brought up around other confessional Christians, because at times in their lives when they were at a distance from their church family they were encouraged by their Christian friends to remain in the one true faith. Their church family has been an example to them, as to how children of God should act, and how to use their various God-given talents to serve Him. Over all, being a member of this church has helped them not only to stave off components of the secular world, but also better understand what a Christian truly is.

What the Bible has to say:

God tells us of the importance of being regularly with fellow believers in His word. **“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”** Hebrews 10:25 Fellowship with like-minded Christians who confess and practice pure doctrine is critical to our walk with the Lord. It provides comfort and helps us to continue to grow through Christian education.

A strong Christian church is also a gift from the Lord to help keep us on guard and away from things that may harm our faith. **“Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”** Romans 16:17,18

The Lord tells us to teach the next generation, and our church is a great place to provide regular Christian education to our children through opportunities like Sunday school and Christian day school. **“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children.”** Deuteronomy 6:6,7

It is also a place to help train us all up in our first commission, our first love. As the Lord commands us, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** Matthew 28: 19-20

Application:

One thing to keep in mind when talking to other people about your church is that being a member of the CLC does not grant us eternal life with God in heaven. Rather, those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior are all members of the one Holy Christian Church, which is not a visible, tangible institution, but is located in the hearts of all believers.

However, the Church of the Lutheran Confession is committed to maintaining the Bible as pure, true, and without fault. The CLC upholds the Brief Statement of 1932, which states: **"Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church."** The CLC does not do this to exalt themselves above other church bodies, but to protect the faith of its members.

As noted by many of our own members, the CLC offers a comforting setting in which to teach, study, and apply God's word with Christian friends. This makes it much easier to strengthen the faith of your friends, family, and of yourself. Through collective efforts and under God's guidance, the CLC has implemented numerous mission opportunities both state-side and abroad, thus following Jesus' command to **"make disciples of all nations."** Many CLC churches, including Berea, offer a Christian day school to **"train up a child in the way he should go."** Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin was established for the continuing education of our young people.

It is important to discuss with our friends and family the importance of reading the Bible as the *true* Word of God, and the dangers of adding, subtracting, or changing content. Only God can tell what is truly in a person's heart, but belonging to a fellowship which upholds God's Word as true is the best way to protect your faith from the dangers of the secular world.

Helpful Material

The CLC website contains various literature and statements which describes in detail the importance of fellowship and difference between the CLC and other Lutheran church bodies, such as: Brief Statement of 1932, Concerning Church and Ministry, Concerning Church Fellowship, and An Ongoing Need: Educating our Children for the Real World.