

# Terms to Know for the Lutheran CORE Convocation

*This brief list of terms intends to provide very basic information to help news media in understanding terms and organizations which may be a part of discussion at the Lutheran CORE Convocation. Please consult the various organizations for more information.*

**Churchwide:** Refers to the ELCA churchwide organization — sometimes called “Chicago,” a reference to the location of the national offices. The ELCA talks about “three expressions” of the church: congregation, synod and churchwide.

**The Common Confession:** A Statement of Faith adopted by Lutheran CORE in 2005. It summarizes basic Lutheran teaching and includes an article affirming that “the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God.”

**Confessional:** Refers to Lutherans who are committed to the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions contained in the *Book of Concord*.

**ELCA - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.** The largest Lutheran Church in the United States with 4.5 million members in more than 10,000 congregations. The ELCA was formed in 1988 by the merger of The American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. It has lost 800,000 members and more than 700 congregations since 1988. The ELCA is the most liberal theologically of Lutheran Church bodies in the United States.

**ELCIC - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.** The ELCA-related Lutheran church body in Canada. It has 152,000 members in 607 congregations. It is theologically liberal and similar to the ELCA.

**Evangelical Catholics:** Lutherans who emphasize the role of Lutheranism as a reform movement within the catholic Church.

**Lutheran CORE:** Lutheran Coalition for Renewal is a community of confessing Lutherans regardless of church body affiliation. Lutheran CORE is a way for traditional Lutherans to work together regardless of their church body affiliation. Some members of Lutheran CORE will remain in the ELCA while others will be in the NALC and other church bodies.

**LCMC - Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ:** LCMC is an association of congregations which originally was formed by members of the WordAlone Network. It currently has roughly 500 congregations — 450 congregations in the United States. About 280 congregations have joined LCMC since the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. It is seen as an alternative church affiliation (denomination) by many who have left the ELCA. LCMC allows women to be pastors. LCMC, Lutheran CORE, and the NALC are committed to working together.

**LWF - Lutheran World Federation:** A global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947, the LWF claims 140 member churches in 79 countries representing over 70 million Lutheran Christians. The state Church of Sweden is the largest LWF church. Two of the largest Lutheran Churches in the world are in Africa: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is the second largest LWF church with 5.3 million members; and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the third largest with 5.28 million members. The ELCA is the fourth largest LWF church. The NALC will consider membership in the LWF. Lutheran Churches in Africa have challenged changes in ELCA teaching and practice on homosexual behavior. Leaders of the Lutheran churches in Tanzania and Ethiopia will speak at Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation.

**NALC - North American Lutheran Church:** A new Lutheran church body being formed for other confessional Lutherans including those who are leaving the ELCA and ELCIC. A Vision and Plan for the formation of the NALC was released in February 18, 2010. The NALC will be constituted at the Lutheran CORE Convocation on August 27, 2010. The North American Lutheran Church will be a centrist Lutheran church body — sitting between the ELCA and the Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod. NALC will have women pastors. It will have a more traditional denominational structure than the LCMC including a national bishop and regional deans. LCMC, Lutheran CORE, and the NALC are committed to working together.

**LCMS - Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:** The second largest Lutheran Church in the United States with 2.4 million members in more than 6,000 congregations. The LCMS is conservative in its stances on doctrine and fellowship and does not allow women to be pastors.

**Reform Movements:** Several regional groupings of pastors, laypeople, and congregations who have been working to reform the ELCA. A listing of the reform movements that comprise Lutheran CORE is on the Lutheran CORE website. Most of these reform movements have changed their focus from reforming the ELCA to providing renewal and fellowship among confessional Lutherans.

**Seven Marks Society:** An evangelical catholic ministerium of Lutheran bishops, pastors, laity and congregations. The Seven Marks Society is to be constituted Aug. 23-24 prior to the Lutheran CORE Convocation. It has been received as a member of Lutheran CORE pending approval by its constituting Convocation.

**Synod:** Lutherans use the word synod in a variety of ways. Synod refers to a regional division of the ELCA similar to a diocese. Synod may also refer to a national church body such as The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod or the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Lutheran CORE is organizing itself as a free synod at this convocation which will be a church fellowship of individuals and congregations. The word synod comes from words which mean “journeying together” or “a way together.”

**WordAlone:** The WordAlone Network was the largest reform movement in Lutheran CORE. It changed its name and focus to WordAlone Ministries in 2010. WordAlone has addressed several theological issues in the ELCA. Its origins can be traced to debates over the historic episcopate when the ELCA was considering a full communion relationship with The Episcopal Church in the 1990s. Both Lutheran CORE and LCMC have roots in the WordAlone Network.