



THE 175 Years LUTHERAN CHURCH Missouri Synod

1825–1849

Founded in 1847

As Saxon and other German immigrants to the United States of America sought the freedom to practice and follow confessional Lutheranism, they established their own church body in what would eventually become known as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

1847

Known as “the Father of the Missouri Synod,” the Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther played a key role in the founding of the LCMS in 1847, serving as the church body’s first president from 1847 to 1850. He again held the office from 1864 to 1878. ▶



1850–1874

1850

F. C. D. Wyneken serves as the second president of the Synod from 1850 to 1864. ▶



1852

St. Louis Ladies Aid is the first group of organized women in the Synod.

1854

The Western, Eastern, Northern, and Central Districts are created.

1856

The first LCMS teacher’s conference is held in Milwaukee.

1860

J. M. Buehler begins his work in California as the “westernmost missionary.” ▶



1867

LCMS immigration mission opened in New York.

1868

LCMS orphanage is established in Des Peres, Missouri. It was the first orphanage of any kind west of the Mississippi.

1869

Concordia Publishing House is founded in St. Louis. ▶



1872

The Synodical Conference is founded.

1874

Concordia Theological Seminary “the Practical Seminary,” moves to Springfield, Illinois. ▶



The first delegate convention of the Synod is held in Fort Wayne.

1875–1899

1877

1877 Synodical Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana, begins mission outreach to Blacks and Native Americans in the U.S.

1878

H. C. Schwan serves as the third president of the Synod from 1878 to 1899. ▶



The Synod’s first black congregation is established in Little Rock, Arkansas.

1882

The first issue of *The Lutheran Witness* is published.

1888

The English Synod is founded.

1893

The Walther League is organized in Buffalo.

Concordia Publishing House moves to Jefferson Boulevard in St. Louis.

1894

August Reinkle preached the first sermon for the deaf in the Synod.

K. G. T. Naether and E. E. Mohn are the Synod’s first foreign missionaries as they are sent to serve in India.

1896

Out Savior Luthern Church in Chicago becomes the first LCMS deaf congregation.

1897

The Synod celebrates 50 years.

1899

F. A. O. Pieper serves as the fourth president of the Synod from 1899 to 1911. ▶



1900–1924

1900

Women gain suffrage in Walther League—20 years before the passing of the 19th Amendment.

Mission work begins in Brazil.

1901

First LCMS baptism in India.

1902

The first Lutheran high school is founded in Milwaukee.

1905

The Wheat Ridge Sanatorium is dedicated.

The Synod establishes the General Church Extension Board.

Mission work begins in Argentina.

1911

F. Pfothenhauer serves as the fifth president of the Synod from 1911 to 1935. ▶



English Synod joins German Synod as the English District.

1912

E. L. Arndt becomes the Synod’s first missionary to China.

1913

The Synod begins medical mission.

1914

The Synod establishes the World Relief office.

1915

At the advice of Booker T. Washington, educator Rosa J. Young contacts the Synod’s Mission Board for help with her Alabama school. She and Mission Executive Nils Bakke form a dynamic team in Black ministry. ▶



1917

The Lutheran Laymen’s League is organized.

1917

The LCMS Board of Directors is established.

The word “German” is eliminated from official name of the Synod.

1919

The Lutheran Deaconess Association is organized.

1923

The Synod begins work with the blind.

1924

KFUO Lutheran radio broadcasts for the first time.

1925–1949

1926

The new St. Louis Seminary campus is dedicated.

1927

The Concordia Historical Institute is incorporated. ▶



1930

The Lutheran Hour broadcasts for the first time.

1935

J. W. Behnkin serves as the sixth president of the Synod from 1935-1962. ▶



1936

The LCMS Armed Services Commission is organized.

Mission work begins in West Africa.

1937

Portals of Prayer debuts.

The LCMS pension fund instituted.

1942

The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League is organized. ▶



1946

Mission work begins in the Philippines.

1947

The Synod celebrates its 100th anniversary.

1948

“The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” name is adopted at the convention.

1950–1974

1950

Dr. Henry Wind becomes the first executive secretary of the LCMS Board of Social Welfare.

1951

Mission work begins in Papua New Guinea.

1952

This Is the Life telecast begins.

1955

Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffman becomes *The Lutheran Hour* speaker.

1957

The first LCMS baptism takes place in New Guinea.

1961

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod suspends relations with LCMS.

1962

O. R. Harms serves as the seventh president of the Synod from 1962 to 1969. ▶



The LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations is formed.

1969

J. A. O. Preus serves as the eighth president of Synod from 1969 to 1981. ▶



1971

The Slovak Synod (SELC) joins the LCMS as a district.

1973

The “Year of Crisis” in Synod culminates in February 1974.

1974

The majority of students and faculty at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, stage a walkout.

The Seminary in Exile (Seminex) is founded.

1975–1999

1976

The Springfield, Illinois Seminary moves to Fort Wayne, Indiana.

1977

The LCMS establishes Lutheran Youth Fellowship.

1981

R. A. Bohlman serves as the ninth president of the Synod from 1981 to 1992. ▶



The Rev. Dr. Joseph Lavalais is elected as first Black vice president of the Synod.

1982

The cornerstone is laid for the LCMS International Center in Kirkwood, Missouri.

1984

The Synod unveils its new logo. ▶



1989

The Synod’s three Canadian districts become the autonomous Lutheran Church—Canada.

1992

Mission work begins in the states of the former Soviet Union.

1992

A. L. Barry serves as 10th president of the Synod from 1992 to 2001. ▶



1993

Using satellite technology, Synod televises, *Easter Live Around the World* from four continents simultaneously.

1997

The LCMS Satellite Service is inaugurated.

The Synod celebrates its 150th anniversary.

2000–2025

2001

Robert T. Kuhn serves as the 11th president of the Synod from March until August. ▶



Gerald B. Kieschnick serves as the 12th president of the Synod from 2001 to 2010. ▶



2010

Matthew C. Harrison begins serving as the 13th president of the Synod. ▶



2011

Lawrence R. Rast Jr. begins his service as the 11th president of CTSFW. ▶



2015

CTSFW’s newly completed Wayne and Barbara Kroemer Library is dedicated.

The Lutheran Federal Credit Union opens.

2016

The Lutheran Identity Statement for CUS schools is adopted.

2017

The 500th Anniversary of The Reformation.

2020

CTSFW celebrates the opening of its 175th academic year teaching the faithful, reaching the lost, and caring for all.



2021

The CTSFW endowment more than tripled with the successful “Make Known His Deeds!” comprehensive campaign.

TODAY

Nearly two million baptized members, in more than 6,000 congregations, and 9,000+ pastors serve the LCMS today.

Two seminaries and seven universities operate under the auspices of the LCMS.

The congregations of the LCMS operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in the United States.