



# PW 101

## PART ONE: THE ORIGIN STORY

### What is this Class?

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The purpose of this class is to tell the story of our **origin**, our **mission**, our **plan** and our **expectations**.

We are intensely interested in NOT simply having “another church” as one might think of churches generically throughout the past 100 years or so. Instead, we are seeking to *build a new people!* And we are convinced this happens through the Power of the Gospel.

**Dig Deeper:** Ephesians 1-3

### What is Praise & Worship?

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Praise & Worship is a Christ-Centered, Disciple-Making Community.

#### What is “Christ-Centered?”

The word **CHRIST** is the Greek word used in place of the original Hebrew word: **MESSIAH**. Messiah means, *Anointed One*. “Anointed One” in the over-arching story of the Bible is a title (not a name) referring to the One who would come to save the world!

**Dig Deeper:** Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12:1-7, Genesis 15:4-6, Genesis 49:8-12, Deuteronomy 18:14-22, 2 Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 2, Isaiah 40-55, Jeremiah 31:31-36, Mark 1, John 1, Romans 3-8, Galatians 3-4.

Being Christ-Centered means we believe in Jesus of Nazareth, we believe He is the Christ, we believe He is the promised savior of the world! Furthermore, we believe that He died for the brokenness of sin, including our own, and “nailed it to the cross” so that when He died, He was the atoning sacrifice we needed to fulfill justice. And then, He rose from the dead!

By centering ourselves in Christ, we are centering ourselves in Him as a person, the work He did, and the work He is now doing...through us!!

#### What is “Disciple-Making?”

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus proclaimed His mission, which He assigned to us:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Wherever we go, whatever we do, we are to be making disciples by baptizing and teaching. And He promises to be with us!

A **disciple** is someone who trusts the promises of Jesus and seeks to follow him. Following Jesus means we seek to continue in our learning of what Jesus teaches, what Jesus does and to go where He is leading us to go. The simplest example of this is what He called His greatest command: “Love God and Love Your Neighbor as Yourself.”

JESUS IS OUR STARTING POINT, OUR MIDDLE POINT AND OUR ENDING POINT.

## **Where did Praise & Worship come from?**

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Praise & Worship was founded by Pastor Dar Karsten in July 2007. A mission group, consisting of a team from Faith Lutheran Church in Branson, gathered at the Bart Rocket theater in Branson for their first “praise and worship service,” and began having “house church” gatherings at other times and places.

Later the group would grow and move to the Golden Corral Theater. During this time the group grew more cohesive and began organizing as more than just a mission group, known as “Praise and Worship Ministries”. After changes at Golden Corral, the group moved to Stonebridge to utilize their events hall for Sunday morning gatherings.

By late 2013, the group had incorporated and chartered as a congregation with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and completed a move to the Lindwedel Winery. On December 15, 2013, Praise and Worship Lutheran Church was born!

On June 28, 2015, Mark Hunsaker was installed as Pastor of Praise & Worship, seeking to partner with this team of Jesus followers who desire for more and more people to receive the gifts of Jesus, which is to say: *make more disciples*.

### **Lutheran?**

Everybody comes from somewhere! We all have a genealogy, a family, or a tribe. Praise & Worship is a Congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

While it isn’t popular to talk about “denominations” these days, we are pleased to introduce to you our group of Jesus followers. We walk together! In fact, that is what the word “synod” means: walking together.

We walk together, we work together, we struggle together, we weep together and we rejoice together. It gets pretty messy sometimes. But we are people who follow Jesus. And we confess, together, that HE is the Risen Lord and that He alone can restore this broken world. Of course, the mystery in that amazing fact is that He has commissioned all those who believe in Him and follow Him to actually be His instruments for spreading His promises to the world!

## What does “Lutheran” mean?

We share an unrelenting passion for God's Word and the centrality of Jesus revealed in Scripture. What's amazing about this, is that we don't limit "God's Word" to just those words written down. But we believe that those written words are proclaimed and brought to all of us in tangible, concrete ways!

We not only walk together, we have a common confession. That's another word that might sound strange to 21st Century ears: confession. In this case, confession means speaking together. We say the same things! Together, we say “Jesus is LORD.” Together, we say: “this” is what it looks like to submit to Him, to proclaim Him, to follow Him and much more.

The word “Lutheran” does not mean we think Martin Luther was some sort of higher man. Quite the contrary. He was a normal man, a broken man, who through his own struggle of asking “Who is God?” and “What do I think of Him?” that led him to a moment that he describes this way:

*At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith. Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open.*

A quote from the Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings

His “discovery” led to the ignition of a chain of events in the 1500's which we now call the Protestant Reformation, a time in the history of the world when everything began to change—again. Most notable for us, was when these reformers stood up in the midst of a boiling cauldron of political, social and religious pressures and “confessed” in Augsburg in June of 1530, what we now call the Augsburg Confession.

This moment in the history of Christianity (and the world!) was a defining moment for people who were seeking to follow Jesus. It is a moment that we continue to be defined by and thus we continue to confess!

WE ARE PART OF A VERY ANCIENT CHURCH.

And yet, that Ancient Church—the very Body of Jesus Himself—is still doing what she has always done: proclaim God's Word in spoken, written and sacramental form.

So when we say we are a Lutheran Church in Branson, Missouri, we are not saying our church is all “about” Martin Luther. He's just our “Uncle Marty!” Instead, we are saying that Luther reminded us to do what the universal, Ancient Church had been doing all along: **pointing people to Jesus**. He was, through his own struggles, his own suffering, returning us to where it all started, to the right foundation. And isn't that what our family, our roots, our tribe, is supposed to do?

## Why no “Lutheran” on your sign or logo?

While we don't hide the fact that we are a Lutheran church, we don't lead with that fact either. In fact, Luther Himself would say:

*The first thing I ask is that people should not make use of my name, and should not call themselves Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone. How did I, poor stinking bag of maggots that I am, come to the point where people call the children of Christ by my evil name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold.*

Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 45 : The Christian in Society II*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 70–71.

So our approach comes directly from Martin Luther himself, not just because he said so but because of his relentlessness in pointing us to Jesus and that we might do the same: point people to Jesus.

Praise & Worship *walks together with* the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod not because of a “denominational” reason, but because of what we believe, teach and confess! When we present ourselves to the world, we present not a “party name” as Luther called it, but rather we present what we believe, teach and confess: That we are a Christ-Centered, Disciple-Making Community.