

Unity in Christ and His Gospel

A Statement from the International Lutheran Council's 28th (13th) World Conference

*Panglao, Bohol, Philippines
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*“Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, ‘I believed, and so I spoke,’ we also believe, and so we also speak...”
– 2 Corinthians 4:13 –*

We live in a deeply fragmented world. War rages in many areas. Nations are riven by internal division and polarization. And even historically Christian church bodies are fractured by theological error, losing sight of God’s Word and the “one thing [that] is necessary” (Luke 10:42).

In the face of such division and confusion, the member churches of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) reassert the centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and risen from the dead for our salvation. Our countries and churches face many different challenges. Some of these—like syncretism, migration, prosperity preachers, and secularism—we have discussed during our time together here in the Philippines. Others include persecution, political instability, natural disasters, and more. But regardless of the different challenges we face, regardless of the different countries and cultures from which we come, we are united in faith in and proclamation of the good news of Christ.

ILC members rejoice that, through the blood of Christ, we are all “fellow citizens with God’s people and members of His household” (Ephesians 2:19). Baptized into Christ, we rejoice that, through His grace, we are together a “holy temple in the Lord,” a dwelling place “in which God lives by His Spirit” (2:22). This spiritual unity in Christ is a gift from God. It transcends culture and language, making us all one in Him.

Our common faith—grounded in the eternal truth of God’s Word and in its faithful exposition in the Book of Concord—teaches us to strengthen the confession of the Gospel of Christ in all its articles (FC SD X 31). On the basis of this “same spirit of faith” (2 Corinthians 4:13), we encourage each other to seek opportunities for closer unity and cooperation between our churches, recognizing that we share a common mission: proclaiming salvation through Christ alone. We ask God to lead us in presenting a united witness of that Gospel to a broken and hostile world.

There is only one Christ and there is only one Gospel. May God grant us continued unity in this truth and inspire us to share this message boldly with a world in need.