



MARTIN LUTHER'S SEAL

The Luther seal or Luther rose (pictured at right) is a widely-recognized symbol for Lutheranism. It was the seal that was designed for Martin Luther at the behest of Prince John Frederick, in 1530, while Luther was staying at the Coburg Fortress during the Diet of Augsburg. Luther saw it as a compendium or expression of his theology and faith, which he used to authorize his correspondence. Luther informed Philipp Melancthon on September 15, 1530 that the Prince had personally visited him in the Coburg fortress and presented him with a signet ring, presumably displaying the seal.

Luther's Interpretation:

The first thing expressed in my seal is a cross, black, within the heart, to put me in mind that faith in Christ crucified saves us. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

Now, although the cross is black, mortified, and intended to cause pain, yet it does not change the color of the heart, does not destroy nature — i.e., does not kill, but keeps alive. "For the just shall live by faith," — by faith in the Savior.

But this heart is fixed upon the center of a white rose, to show that faith causes joy, consolation and peace. The rose is white, not red, because white is the ideal color of all angels and blessed spirits.

This rose, moreover, is fixed in a sky-colored ground, to denote that such joy of faith in the spirit is but an earnest and beginning of heavenly joy to come, as anticipated and held by hope, though not yet revealed.

And around this ground base is a golden ring, to signify that such bliss in heaven is endless, and more precious than all joys and treasures, since gold is the best and most precious metal. Christ, our dear Lord, He will give grace unto eternal life.



RESOURCES

- History provided by wikipedia.org
- Text of Luther's interpretation from a card distributed by Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, (Now Thrivent Financial for Lutherans) in the 1950s and reproduced at www.ELCA.org/What-We-Believe/New-or-Returning-to-Church/Dig-Deeper/Seal-of-Martin-Luther.aspx

MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.

"For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved." ROMANS 10:10



ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 131,000 baptized people in 185 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

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SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD, ELCA
 1001 14TH ST. NW, SUITE 300
 ROCHESTER, MN 55901-2551
 (507) 280-9457

WWW.SEMNSYNOD.ORG