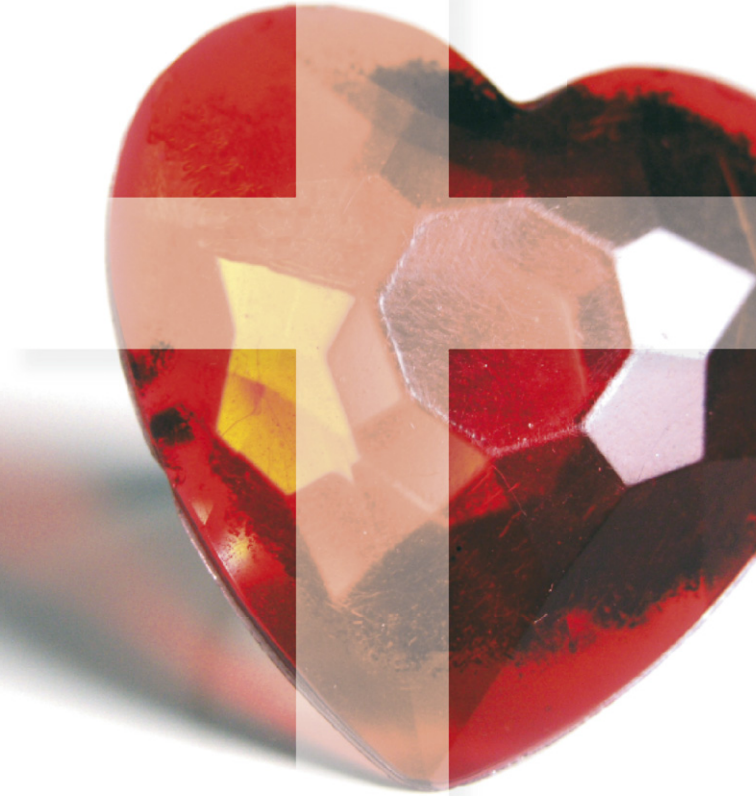
WELCOME TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN FINLAND



THE CHURCH

IN DAILY LIFE AND IN TIMES OF CELEBRATION

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore 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 that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

THE CONGREGATION

The Christian congregation is a community of Christians. It acts locally, but is part of a greater whole, the worldwide Christian Church. The Christian Church is open to everyone, and you are welcome to take part in its activities. You do not need to be a Christian to attend church activities or to receive its support. At church, you can establish friendships and perhaps even join in some voluntary work.

A person becomes a member of the Christian church through Holy Baptism. Baptism is a sacrament of the church. Jesus himself instituted the Holy Baptism of his followers.

Godparents, or baptismal sponsors, are Christians whose task is to spiritually support the upbringing of the baptized and to pray for him or her. If you would like to become a member of the church as an adult, you will need to take part in adult confirmation instruction. After completion, you will be confirmed and also baptized, if you have not been baptized earlier.

During confirmation instruction, students study the Bible, the Christian Holy Book, and learn to know God. Confirmation instruction, also called baptismal teaching, may be attended as a youth or as an adult. Following confirmation instruction, you may be confirmed. Confirmation means that you confess your belief as a Christian while God reinforces your faith. You may attend confirmation instruction even though you do not wish to become member of the church. Finnish youth are usually confirmed between 14–16 years of age.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN ONE GOD.

All Christians regard God as the Creator, the Savior and the Defender of the world. God is Love and all people are equal in His eyes. God reveals Himself to the people in the world He has created and through the holy writings of the Bible. God is omnipresent, and everyone may pray to Him. God knows our thoughts, and knows each one of us thoroughly. God sent Jesus, the Savior to the world. The Bible tells us about Him.

Jesus opened the way for us to God by redeeming our sins. Jesus is both a historical person and also God. He was executed as an innocent man, but after three days he rose from the dead. Christians, that is, people who accept Jesus as their Savior, will receive eternal life after death. To Christians, the cross is a sign of victory; it signifies the death and resurrection of Jesus.

God's Holy Spirit guides us to turn to Christ and to trust in God's promises. The Holy Spirit increases faith in God and helps people to love God and their neighbors.

THE CHURCH IS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

THE CHURCH IS WITH YOU THROUGHOUT THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF YOUR LIFE.

One of the special features of the Finnish Lutheran church is its well-trained and broad-skilled base of workers. Within the church you can find, for example, child, family, youth and diaconia workers, church musicians and pastors as well as professionals in other fields.

Children and childhood are valued highly in the church. For the children, there are activities aimed especially for them: Worship services and Sunday schools; clubs; outings and camps.

The church's youth work offers teenagers and adolescents Bible teaching, clubs, evenings with special programs, game evenings, trips, camps and musical activities.

Christians serve people in different ways. That is what is called the church's diaconia. You can ask advice from a diaconia work in any kind of situation. The church's workers also do pastoral work. This means a confidential conversation concerning questions of faith or other issues related to life.

Family counseling offers discussion-based help for marriage and family-related problems. In some hospitals, educational institutions, prisons, and army garrisons, there are church workers with whom it is possible to talk and pray.

There are many types of church events at which you can practice your own faith together with other people. The central church activity is the Sunday worship service. In addition, the congregations carry out a wide range of different activi-

ties such as discussion and study groups, various forms of music activities, excursions and retreats. You can also participate in volunteer work or, perhaps, assist in the worship service. There are many possibilities.

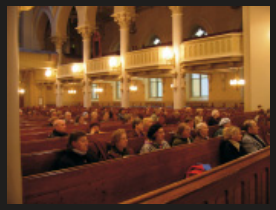
THE SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

The Sunday service invites all Christians to come together. Usually the main service is on Sunday mornings at 10 o'clock. The whole family can take part in it. The communion service, also called "messu", includes Holy Communion, which is one of the two sacraments of the Lutheran church. In communion, people receive the forgiveness of sins. God serves his people with His word. The prayers, confession, Bible reading and praise are all linked together uniting the congregation together.

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The church has played an important role in Finnish history since the 12th century. The Finnish written language was developed within the church, as it was the educational establishment, medical care, and social services. Finnish legislation is based upon biblical principles concerning right and wrong. The Christian calendar is based upon the birth of Christ.

Most Finns belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and therefore it is called a folk church. Many Finns are baptized as members of the church when they are infants. Many people get married in the church. In Finland, a pastor does the burial service for the deceased. The church has an active role and influence in society, and defends the interests of the disadvantaged.



And the King will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Matthew 28:18-19

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

International responsibility begins with the love of our neighbors. God created the whole world and gave humankind the task of taking care of the world - of its people, and its environment.

The Church does missionary work, which is teaching the Christian faith and serving other people. The aim of missionary work is to spread the Good News to all people.

The Church's emergency aid provides help during major tragedies, natural disasters, and wars occurring around the world. The Church is also a partner in many development programs.

Ecumenism is fellowship, discussion and cooperation between different Christian denominations. We all share the same faith in the risen Jesus Christ.

THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN CELEBRATIONS

CHRISTMAS

At Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is celebrated. Christmas is the birthday celebration of Jesus. Christmas Eve, December 24th, is a time of preparation for the Christmas feast. On Christmas Eve, churches hold a worship service. Christmas Day (December 25th) is Jesus' birthday, and for this reason, it is a national holiday in Finland. For Finns, Christmas is a highly family-oriented feast.

EASTER

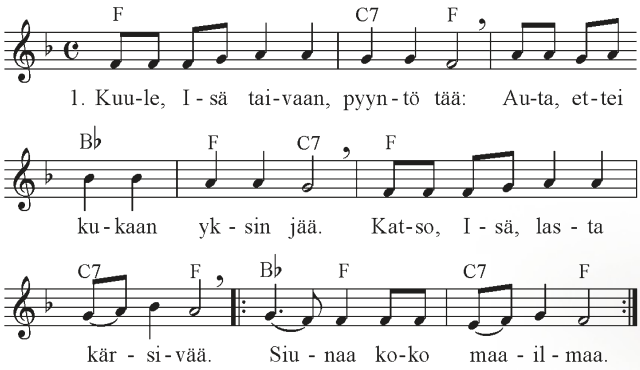
Easter is the celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It is the most important celebration for Christianity. Easter is preceded by a period of fasting, during which we prepare ourselves before God. Easter week, or Holy Week, starts on Palm Sunday. This day reminds us of when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and the people welcomed Him as king, laying palm leaves on the road. On Maundy Thursday we remember the Last Supper between Christ and His disciples, and the institution of the Holy Communion (or the Eucharist). Communion is celebrated in churches nearly every Sunday. Good Friday is the day when Jesus died. Easter day is the day of his resurrection. Through Jesus's sacrifice and bloodshed for humanity, we have all been redeemed.

PENTECOST

On this day, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' disciples. They began to speak with confidence about Jesus to other people. The Christian Church was born on the day of Pentecost.

HYMN 501

Enoch Sontonga 1897



1.
Listen, precious Father, as we pray.
Help us when we come and wail to you.
Here we come with pains, with heavy loads.
Oh, grant blessings to the world!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!

2.
Hear this humble prayer, which comes to you.
It is our request for daily bread.
Do not forget us, we trust in you!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!

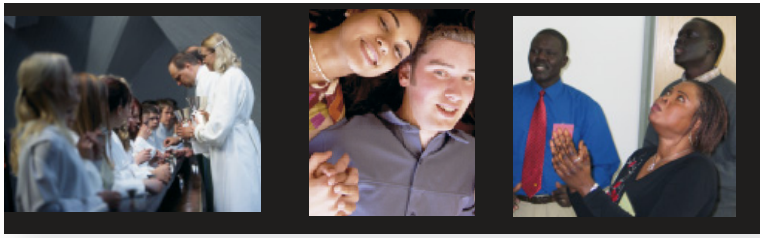
3.
Listen, holy Father, we need peace
all among destructions, wars and death.
Give today your blessing, give your love!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!

4.
Protect all the nature of this world;
trees and forests, jungles, lands and seas,
youngsters, adults, elders, every being!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!

THE LORD'S BLESSING

"The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.
In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".

Numbers 6:24-26



5.
Grant us, tender Father, faith and love;
Give much joy and hope to every home.
May your grace be filling all our hearts!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!
Oh, grant blessings to the world!

Jaakko Löytty 1985. Translation Orlando Molina 2006.

SUOMEN EVANKELIS-LUTERILAINEN KIRKKO
EVANGELISK-LUTHERSKA KYRKAN I FINLAND

Ask your local congregation if Sunday Services or other activities are offered in your native language. The Church and its staff invite you to participate in your local congregation; or they can come to visit you at your home.

May God bless you!