

# Getting Down to Basics: The Augsburg Confessions and Small Catechism

Class Sessions: Sept. 13 – Nov. 21, 2024

Orientation Monday Sept. 9 at 7:00 Central Time

Dr. Erick Thompson

This course analyzes the history and development of the theology of *The Book of Concord*, especially the Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism, with a view to establishing the importance of their contents for the ministry of pastors, teachers, and congregations.

More specifically the student will:

- Become thoroughly familiar with the Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism;
- Understand the historical and theological context out of which they speak;
- Discover new ways to apply these teaching to life in today's parish.

## Facilitator as Resource

The class facilitator will be familiar with the lectures and reading material, read student postings, and will be rotating the type of interface he uses with the student each week. The week that there is a live chat, the chat will be the interface. Other weeks the facilitator will be responding to either essays or to threaded discussions or give a general written response to the issues of that week.

The facilitator for this class is Dr. Erick Thompson. Erick grew up in central Minnesota, attending Gustavus Adolphus for college. After college he received his MDiv and MTh at Luther Seminary in St Paul, and then earned a PhD in Systematic Theology from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He has been an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament since 2000, with over 20 years of parish experience. Erick has also been an adjunct professor, teaching over 25 classes at Thiel College, Augsburg University, and, most recently, Concordia College. He is married and has two daughters in middle school. His hobbies include reading, watching movies, writing, and cheering on the Twins and the Vikings.

**Orientation call Monday September 9 at 7:00 PM Central Time:** You will be enrolled in the course site the weekend proceeding the orientation phone call. Please take the following week to explore the course site. There are a number of tasks to do during the orientation time: update your profile, introduce yourself in the “Getting to Know You” forum, and indicating your choice about “Why are you taking this course?” You can’t hurt anything, click around the course homepage and explore! The orientation call with the course facilitator will be Monday September 9 at 7:00 PM Central Time. This call will be done with a video conference tool called Zoom. You do not need to download any software in advance and instructions will be in the class site. If you do not have a camera and microphone connected with your computer you may call in by phone instead.

## Weekly course guide:

Sometime Friday through Sunday...

- Watch the lectures for the session
- Read any assigned readings
- Post your thoughts in the discussion essay forum

Sunday through Tuesday

- Read the forum postings
- Respond to 2 of your classmates in the discussion essay forum with a 1-3 sentence response
- Post your thoughts in the key question forum

By Wednesday through Thursday of each week

- Read the forum postings
- In the key question forum respond to at least 2 other participants with 1-3 sentences.

### **Variation: Sessions 4 and 8**

In these 2 sessions instead of the second forum, there will be a Zoom call for 1 hour Monday at 7:00 Central Time.

## **Schedule**

September 13    Session 1: Confessing Justification (Augsburg Confession articles I-II, IV-V, XIX,)  
 September 20    Session 2: Law and Gospel; theology of the Cross (III, XII, XVII)  
 September 27    Session 3: God's Two Hands (XVI, XVIII)  
 October 4        Session 4: Good Works and Christian Vocation (VI, XX-XXI, XXVI-XXVII)

**During this week there will be a one hour Zoom call on Monday instead of a key question forum.**

October 11       Session 5: The Sacraments (IX-XI, XIII, XXII, XXIV-XXV)  
 October 18       Session 6: Church and Ministry (VII-VIII, XIV-XV, XXIII, XXVIII)  
 October 25       Session 7: Other Confessional Documents  
 November 1      Session 8: The Small Catechism: 10 Commandments and Creed

**During this week there will be a one hour Zoom call on Monday instead of a key question forum**

November 8      Session 9: The Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and Confession  
 November 15    Session 10: The Lord's Supper with Luther's Preface, The Household Chart of Bible Passages, and Liturgies for the Christian Household

**Final paper:** due **December 5**, two weeks after the completion of the course sessions.

### **Grading:**

The grading for the Getting Down to Basics course is simply pass-fail. This grade is assigned after the final paper is completed and takes into account the way you used what you learned in the course to weave together the lectures, reading and discussions in your final paper, whether you participated in the three Zoom discussions (Orientation, Session 4, and Session 8), whether you posted all your Discussion Essays and Key Question Essays in a timely manner, and whether you responded to the Discussion and Key Question posts of two colleagues in a way reflective of our class covenant.

Passing = Participation in at least 2 of the 3 Zoom calls; posting of at least 12 of the 18 essays; at least 26 responses to the essays of your colleagues; submission of a final paper integrating the course material using the guidelines for the final paper.