

**Lutherans Talk About...Scripture, Marriage, Ordination and LGBTQIA+: A Bible Study**  
Reconciling in Christ Team of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Missoula, MT Rev. Jean Larson

Session 1: How Lutherans interpret Scripture and The Essential Stories of the OT

**Welcome!** Meet and Greet. What are you hoping for from this study?

**Prayer**

**How Lutherans read and interpret Scripture: 4 lenses** (there are more!)

1. What is the Word of God? #1: Jesus

#2: The Bible

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, interpret it in the light of Jesus.

2. Let Scripture interpret Scripture: the Whole of Scripture interprets individual verses and stories.

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, interpret it in light of the essential faith-shaping stories of the Bible.

3. Lutherans are not and have never been fundamentalists who assert that every word of the Bible is literally, historically true.

Principle A: When faced with a hard or confusing text, bring in all the tools that are necessary for understanding—history, culture, language, science, experience, tradition.

Principle B: Our study is never complete; it is always open to new guidance from the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is a living word.

4. Law-based texts function differently from gospel-based texts. Law shows us our sin; gospel saves us from it. (There are gospel—grace-based—texts in the OT and law in the NT.)

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, figure out if it is law or gospel and apply it accordingly.

**The Essential Old Testament Stories and their Challenges**

‘Red threads’ are the big picture themes we can follow through the whole Bible.

What happens to the community of faith and its boundaries? Its identity?

>Red Thread #1: God establishes and nurtures a particular community

**Story #1: Slaves are freed -- Exodus 6:2-9**

*And more: a brief review of OT history!*

(Commandments are given -- Exodus 20: 1-17)

(Strangers are welcome -- Deuteronomy 10: 12-22 (\*17-19)

(Faithlessness, collapse, and exile – Isaiah 58, 2 Kings 25)

Challenges to identity: The Holiness Code Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

Challenges to community: Sodom: Genesis 19: 1-29

(Gibeah: Judges 19:22-30)

**Story #2: Restoring the community-- Outsiders become insiders -- Isaiah 56: 1-8**

Take home: God’s welcome expands beyond old boundaries

>The challenge: What defines the community? Are there any boundaries?