

performs unto us, and therewithal strengthens and increases our faith through the working of God's Spirit in our hearts; lastly, whereby he does separate us from all other people and religions, and consecrates and binds us wholly unto himself, and gives us to understand what he requires of us."

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 27, states:

I. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him; as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.

II. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it; but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers."

c. Lutheran Definition

"Saving grace is imparted to man not only through the Word, but also through the Sacraments; and, as in the case of the Word, so also in the case of the Sacraments, an external and visible element, which in the sacred rite is offered to man, becomes the vehicle of the Holy Ghost. A Sacrament is, therefore, a holy rite, appointed by God, through which, by means of an external and visible sign, saving grace is imparted to man, or, if he already possess it, is assured to him. The Evangelical Church (the Evangelical Lutheran Church) enumerates only two such rites, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for only through these two rites, in accordance with the direction of Christ, is such saving grace imparted, and, among all the sacred ordinances prescribed in Scripture, it is only in these two that these two distinguishing characteristics of a sacrament are combined, via, (1) a special divine purpose, in accordance with which, in the sacred rite, an external element is to be thus employed; and (2) the promise given in the divine Word that by the application of this element evangelical saving grace shall be imparted. By these marks these two sacred rites are distinguished from all other religious services, and, hence, for the purpose of thus distinguishing them, are called Sacraments."

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Third Edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1899), pp. 520-521.