



Making the Most of Reformation 500 in Your Congregation

The 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity not to be missed – for the sake of our witness to the world! Learn about many great ideas and resources available from our Synod, Churchwide organization and publishers, and the Lutheran World Federation which will help you commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in truly memorable, inspiring, and faith-deepening ways.

Here are Synodical hoped-for outcomes for our Reformation 500 Commemorations – these hopes can inform your local planning, too! We will:

- promote a deepened, renewed, and joyful sense of global Lutheran identity for the 21st Century
- make a bold public witness in various formats and media, communicating what the Reformation means to audiences outside of the church
- nurture strengthened, reconciling ecumenical and interfaith relationships
- use the Reformation 500 themes to address current societal needs and opportunities

So, what are your local Reformation 500 dreams and plans for autumn of 2017?

- What are your special plans for Reformation Sunday on October 29?
- Have you thought about providing educational events on Reformation 500 themes?
- How about new and creative ways to use Luther's Small Catechism? After all, the catechism is not just for kids!
- What about Reformation-themed movie nights? There are some great old and new films and videos available.
- Who are your ecumenical and interfaith partners in your community? How about reconciling events and initiatives with them during this year?
- How about reaching out to your local media for special feature stories during late October of this year?
- How might you engage your community with service projects, making the most of our tagline, "God's Work, Our Hands"?

Resources listed on the following pages can assist you in your dreaming and planning!

Resources:

ELCA

“Freed and Renewed in Christ: 500 Years of God’s Grace in Action” is the churchwide theme for 2017. Our churchwide office has developed resources to assist your planning for various local Reformation 500 initiatives including materials for: worship; catechism instruction; ecumenical and inter-religious observances; service projects; videos for events; and other planning resources

For further details, see: <https://www.elca500.org/>

Augsburg Fortress

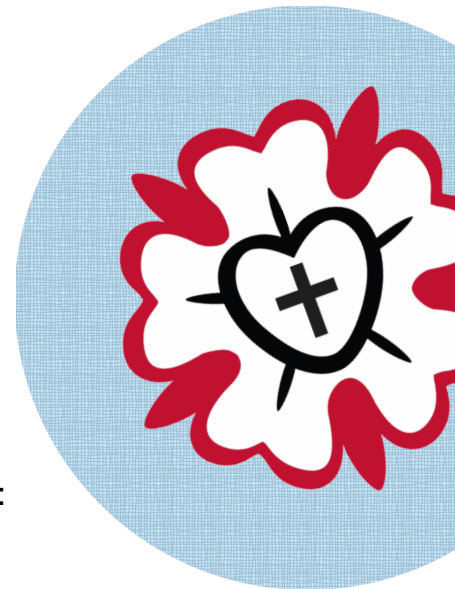
Luther was a professor and scholar, so rigorous study drove much of his spiritual life. Augsburg Fortress has published several new books specifically oriented to this Reformation 500th Anniversary year. Topics include: Reformation studies; books on Martin Luther; writings of the Reformation. How about hosting a series of book study events as part of your Reformation 500th observances?

To browse titles and book descriptions, see: <http://augsburgfortress.org/store/category/286460/Reformation-500>

Lutheran World Federation

“Liberated by God’s Grace 2017: 500 Years of Reformation” is the LWF focus for this year. The LWF has developed resources to assist engagement with the following thematic emphases: Salvation – Not for Sale; Human Beings – Not for Sale; Creation – Not for Sale. Maybe you could host a series of adult forums on these thought-provoking, relevant topics.

For further information, see: <https://www.lutheranworld.org/reformation-2017>



Metropolitan New York Synod

Reformation 500: “Faith, not Fear” – “Faith, not Fear” is our synodical tagline for 2017. Consider developing Bible Studies on how faith overcomes fear, a very relevant topic during our anxious times in nation and world. Or maybe plan a “Faith, not Fear” sermon series. Invite testimonials and conversation about how the power of faith in Christ can overcome our fears.

Revisiting the 95 Theses Today – Luther’s posting of the 95 Theses is what got the Reformation started in the first place. Thus, we do well to take a look at the 95 Theses again today to see what the issues were then, and how those issues are still relevant today. We have developed a 95 Theses study guide based on Prof. Tim Wengert’s new book, *Martin Luther’s 95 Theses with Introduction, Commentary, and Study Guide*. In addition to this book available from Augsburg Fortress, the resource we have developed is available on our synod website for your local use and adaptation.

Rediscovering the Small Catechism: What does This Mean Today? – Most Lutherans have tales to tell about their days memorizing and studying Luther’s Small Catechism. But again, the catechism is not just for kids! We have developed a spiritually compelling resource to worshipfully and conversationally engage the Small Catechism. Leaders and participants versions of this resource are also available on our synod website.

Luther’s Spirituality in his Writings – Pastor Jonathan Linman is available to lead a presentation on Luther’s spirituality in your local setting – an inspiring focus for our day when so many claim to be “spiritual, but not religious.”

Telling Your Lutheran Stories – Consider inviting persons in your local setting to give testimonies or write up stories of what belonging to the Lutheran tradition means to them. See our synod website for examples of Lutheran stories. Also see the “Our Lutheran Life” series in *Living Lutheran*.

For further information on Reformation 500 synod events, initiatives, resources, and what other congregations are doing in 2017, see our Reformation 500 Webpages: <http://www.mnys.org/500thanniversary/>

Consider inviting the Assistant to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation, Jonathan Linman, to your setting to lead or help you plan your various events – 212-870-2374 and/or jlinman@mnys.org

Upcoming Reformation 500 Events in 2017:

- August 16-18 Reformation 500: "Faith, Justice, and Our Changing Community"
Worship; speakers; workshops; banquet; revival
Urban Leaders Institute of our synodical Black Pastors Group
The Interchurch Center (August 16-17) and
Resurrection Lutheran Church, St. Albans (August 18)
- September 6 & 8 Lectures by International Luther Scholar, Thomas Kaufmann
Author of: *A Short Life of Martin Luther*
Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, Manhattan
- Wednesday, September 6, 6:00 – 9:00 pm
"Luther's Christ and the Other Religions"
- Saturday, September 9, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
"The Challenge and Opportunity of the Reformation Anniversary"
- October 14 Reformation 500: "Faith, not Fear" – A Multicultural Festival
Sponsored by our synodical Multicultural Committee
Speakers – What does Reformation Mean to Me?
Also: poetry; art; fashion show; food; music; dance; worship
Saturday, October 14, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Epiphany Lutheran Church, Hempstead
- October 31 "Lutheran-Catholic Relations: Where do We Go from Here?"
Speaker and Panel Discussion; Ecumenical Worship; Luncheon
Tuesday, October 31
A daytime event – location and hours to be determined
- November 1 Commemorative Eucharist and Festive Reception
Cathedral of St. John the Divine
Wednesday, November 1, 6:00 – 9:30 pm



For further information as it is
available see our synod website:
www.mnys.org