

Reformation Sunday is October 29th



The Augsburg Confession

This is intense.

October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nails his 95 Theses to the church door. “Can we talk?” Apparently not. So, Luther continues to agitate.

In October of 1518 and January of 1519 Luther debates with leading Roman Catholic Theologians. In 1521 Luther is ex-communicated. He is also declared an outlaw by Emperor Charles V. (It is during this time of banishment that Luther translates the New Testament into German.) By 1525 some 100,000 German peasants lay dead in the streets. The Reformation had become open revolt. In 1530 Emperor Charles V said “**Enough!**” Spiritual unrest had erupted into political dysfunction. Yes, that’s how it works.

The Augsburg Confession was written for a meeting called by Charles V. In it, Luther clarified the teachings of the now 13-year-old Lutheran movement. He articulated what it was Reformers and Roman Catholics agreed on, what they didn’t, and what in their disagreements were central and peripheral. Common ground was still not found.

In times of social, political and religious discord defining oneself is essential. “*Iron sharpens iron.*” As the scriptures say. Mush sharpens nothing!

As the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation comes to us Lutherans continue to define, refine and contextualize our faith and witness.

American Lutheranism has a 78-year history of refugee resettlement and relocation work through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS.) Over these years, we have helped settle over 500,000



Youth Reformation Event

Sunday October 8.
11:30 to 2:30

St Mark's is having a Reformation Educational Event for kids grades K-6th grade.

Join us for a fun filled 3 hours including lunch made by the kids, education about Martin Luther, related games, and a related craft activity.

Please RSVP by Oct 1 by emailing [Dolores Morelli](mailto:Dolores.Morelli@stmarkslutheran.org) or calling the church office. See Dolores or Sally Durham with questions

refugees. We will continue this work.

In 1945 American Lutherans formed a government advocacy effort which today is known as the *Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs*. Through *LOGA* we have under our belt 72 years of advocating for individual and family rights and benefits. Our voice will stay in the debate.

And, for over 150 years, Lutheran hospitals have served the sick, counseling centers have worked with families, and adoption agencies have striven for the wellbeing and safety of children. Lutheran Services of America now touches one in every 50 American lives. There is still work to do!

We know who we are, doctrinally, functionally and spiritually. The coming 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation finds us once again in the midst of spiritual unrest and political dysfunction. You know what to do. Do it!

With you on the journey,

Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke

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Women and the Reformation

"I am prepared to lose everything, even life or limb. May God stand by me."

"So wrote Argula von Grumbach (1492–1563/68?) from Bavaria, who found Martin Luther's message of Christian freedom and equality empowering. This noble woman challenged an entire Catholic university in Ingolstadt in defense of Lutheran faith and was a student persecuted for "Lutheran heresy." This best-selling lay author's letter-treatises eventually disappeared under pressure from male authorities. Luther considered her a valiant hero of faith."

The role of women in the Reformation, and our Lutheran history to follow, is not understood by many. Katie Luther we may know. Argula von Grumbach, and so many women reformers, you may not. Today Lutherans are blessed with women pastors, bishops, teachers, healers and mystics. It has not always been so. Nor, are women spiritual leaders recognized equally even in all Lutheran denominations around the world. The Reformation continues.

Why might women today find the Lutheran message of *"Christian freedom and equality"* empowering? Answer: Because the world is not yet free.

During my pastoral internship in 1982 I met a German Lutheran trained theologian in her late 70s. She was a member of the congregation I served. One day she told me her story, how she had met an American Lutheran pastor, married and moved to the U.S. Her husband was from a Lutheran denomination that did not ordain women. Almost in passing she said, *"Of course, I couldn't stay in prison forever . . ."* so she and her husband had changed churches.

"I couldn't stay in prison forever!" I remember this woman clearly. She was articulate, often times took me to task after a sermon or Bible class; she clearly felt like her move to the U.S. had robbed her of an essential part of her identity, and her "inner monk" had long ago burst forth as the Reformer.



Celebration Events at St. Mark's

October Bible Study

The 8:30am Sunday Bible study throughout October will be "Reformation 101": Why should I care about this Luther guy? What are these 95 theses? What is this Reformation thing, and why does it matter?

Reformation 500 Bookstore

Beginning on October 8th, the Augsburg Fortress "bookstore in a box" of Reformation-themed books will be available to people in the Fellowship Room to examine and begin placing orders.

St. Mark's Reformation Choir

On Sunday Oct. 22nd everyone is invited to come together to form a special choir to sing on Reformation Sunday, Oct. 29th.

Reformation Sunday, October 29th

Worship will be at 10am with Heavenly Peace.

Jon Cheskin will play one of Bach's unaccompanied suites for cello (Bach is another great Lutheran theologian); the choir will do an anthem; after worship we will have a birthday cake for the Reformation and invite people to bring "movie snacks", as we will be showing Rick Steves' special on *Luther and the Reformation* in the Social Hall and a Mandarin-language Martin Luther movie in the Library.

Lutheran women have been, and are, gifted proclaimers of the Word. They also carry stories of oppression, abuse, marginalization and struggle. In this they keep us close to the very essence of the Reformation.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has written, *"There is no more valuable investment than in a girl's education."* Lutherans would agree!

Keep the Faith!

Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke