

Freed and Renewed in Christ: 500 Years of God's Grace in Action

A how-to-guide for Reformation 500 planning and promotion

This year offers Lutherans the opportunity to observe the Reformation anniversary in ways that are forward-looking, outward-directed and focused on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

The widespread interest in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, including among those who are not Lutheran, offers a once-in-a-lifetime to make a public witness of Christ that expresses Lutheran convictions about the freedom Christ brings.

To help you plan, prepare and engage people at all levels of interest, the following easy-to-use materials are available. You are welcome to use any that you find helpful.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITY PLANNING

All are invited to participate in the Reformation anniversary leading up to Oct. 31, 2017. Should you choose to participate – and we hope that you do – there are ways to do so with a public witness focus, particularly in the four areas below, with supporting resources available at elca500.org and the [Reformation Sourcebook](#).

- **Worship and preaching:** Incorporate opportunities to explore the catechism and other writings and teachings of Martin Luther, as well as Reformation art and culture, including music.
- **Education:** Provide classes to help people of all ages more deeply understand Luther's teachings and writings, the Reformation, and its impact from 500 years ago through today
- **Service and vocation:** The Reformation anniversary offers good timing to help people connect their service to their faith through special service projects that also deepen the meaning of a life in service to which God calls us all.
- **Ecumenical and inter-religious:** Create, build and/or sustain relationships with ecumenical and inter-religious partners that foster dialogue, understanding and healing. Find more details in the "Approaching your neighbors" section below.

You are welcomed to refer to the [Reformation Ideas for Observing the 500th Anniversary](#) list of ideas to spark your creativity and identify what makes the most sense for your community.

APPROACHING AND COLLABORATING WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS

Honoring our commitment to ecumenical and inter-religious outreach, the Reformation anniversary is an occasion to engage with partners of other Christian communities and other religious traditions. Among them are our Catholic and Jewish friends as we heal past wounds and deepen a meaningful relationship.

In support of building these relationships, below are a few suggested ideas on beginning this process to reach out, connect and participate in joint activities.

- Visit with clergy neighbors in Roman Catholic and/or other faith traditions or perhaps leaders in your area's religious community. Share documents that have been written by Lutheran-Roman Catholic theologians (e.g. ["From Conflict to Communion"](#)). Consider possibilities for mutual study and conversation.
- Ask your bishop about reaching out to a nearby Roman Catholic bishop-colleague to consider taking leadership roles to explore mutual study and joint worship celebrations in the area.
- Speak with your choir director or other music leaders about reaching out to other parish music leaders in your area to plan a joint, ecumenical music festival.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

Poster

A selection of [posters](#) will help you communicate your activities and events within your congregation and, where appropriate, other community organizations, local stores and on available bulletin boards. Simply fill in the information space and print as needed.

Bulletins

When communicating Reformation anniversary information, consider these few suggestions:

- Events and activities: Include blurbs (small activities) or an insert (for larger events). When creating inserts, consider using the anniversary logo.
- Non-events: Include educational inserts such as:
 - “About the Lutherans” inserts found in the [Reformation Sourcebook](#)
 - [Luther House of Study inserts](#)
 - [Martin Luther’s “95 Theses”](#) handouts, available for printing through [elca500.org](#)
 - [Lutheranism 101](#) handouts, available for printing through [elca500.org](#)

You can access the anniversary logo and “About the Lutherans” using the CD in the sourcebook’s back cover.

Newsletter

In addition to communicating your events, consider linking your electronic newsletters to your congregation, synod and/or [elca500.org](#) websites. Where possible, consider using the anniversary logo available in the [Reformation Sourcebook](#).

Website and social media

For your website, consider adding a Reformation 500 tab or section with updated information to keep your members and community aware of upcoming events.

If you have Facebook and Twitter accounts, you are encouraged to connect to [ELCA500 Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) so you can share photos, upcoming events (with a link to your website, if available), and brief event recaps. You can also learn how other congregations and synods are participating. When posting to social media, consider using the hashtag #ELCA500 to note your Reformation specific information.

Below are examples of ELCA websites with Reformation 500 tabs that show the many ways to share information.

- [Milwaukee Synod](#)
- [Oregon Synod](#)
- [Central States Synod](#)
- [St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Atlanta](#)
- [Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Ill.](#)
- [St Andrew’s Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Neb.](#)

Booklets

In support of Reformation activities, several synods and congregations have created booklets to inform and educate their membership and communities.

- [Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, Mich.](#)
- [Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis](#) (Due to size this document is slow to load)
- [North Carolina Synod](#) (see bottom right of page: “Ever Reforming”)

Media relations

Please refer to the communications guide hosted on [elca500.org/Resources/More](#).