



COMMEMORATING THE 500TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
REFORMATION THROUGH

Exploring the Intersections between Christian Freedom and Personal, Social and Global Bodies

JUNE 4-6
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



Event Schedule

Sunday

Plenary I: Christian Freedom 3:00-4:30pm
Leila Ortiz, Terra Rowe, Michon Weeks

Worship.....5:00-6:00pm

Monday

Breakfast 7:30-8:15am

Morning Prayer ____ 8:15-8:45am

Plenary II: Personal Body 9:00-10:30am
Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, Jennifer Hockenberry Dragseth,
Regina M. Laroche

Concurrent Sessions I 10:45-12:15pm

Lunch 12:30-1:30pm

Plenary III: Social Body 1:30-3:00pm
Deanna Thompson, Karis Thompson, Beverly Wallace

Concurrent Sessions II 3:30-5:00pm

Banquet and Program 6:00-9:30pm

Tuesday

Breakfast7:30-8:15am

Morning Prayer ___ 8:15-8:45am

Plenary IV: Global Body9:00-10:30am
Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Elaine Neuenfeldt, Stacy Kitahata

Closing Session____ 11:00-12:30pm



Plenary Session Descriptions

Plenary I: Embodied Christian Freedom

Leila Ortiz, Terra Rowe, Michon Weeks

Modern concepts of freedom emphasize the price for human liberation. Often the loss of embodied freedom for some emerges as the justified cost of intellectual or spiritual freedom for a dominant group. Luther's articulation of freedom comes with a steep price. More than the price of bound service that Luther emphasizes, he does not acknowledge the cost of defining Christian liberty in opposition to the Jewish other and those still deemed bound to the Law. And yet Luther may offer resources to move beyond a binary definition of freedom that requires the embodied sacrifice of an other's freedom. Beyond arguing at the level of human rationality with implications solely for spiritual liberation, he pointed toward freedom that emerges only in embodied social, communal, and divinely interconnected, contingent relations. What are the characteristics of this embodied Christian contingent freedom and might it pose a helpful alternative to modern, Enlightenment freedom? What might this Christian liberty feel like? Where and under what conditions do we experience this freedom? What might be some of the social, political, ecological, and economic implications or effects? This session will explore these issues and questions through intellectual engagement, storytelling, ritual making, and artistic expression.

Plenary II: Everyday Embodied Faith: Lutheran Views of Identity in a Global Context.

Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar,
Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth, Regina M. Laroche

The physical body is a miraculous, complex, sacred, troublesome place of connection, intersection, integration, and so much more. Spirit, matter; life, death; relationship, division; sense of self, sense of other; justice, injustice; love, hatred; holiness and evil - all dance themselves out in the wonder of our bodies and the body of creation. Luther embraced the body, integrating it into his theology, shepherding, and teaching. This session explores every day, embodied experience in a variety of contexts. The presenters will explain their understanding of Luther's view of Christian liberty and justice by highlighting stories of individuals who have found Lutheran theology particularly meaningful in their everyday lives in contexts quite distant from Luther's own. These will include individuals in the Global North whose sense of identity are torn by cultural ideas of gender, ethnicity, and citizenship as well as individuals in the Global South who are far from Luther's geographic context yet find his theology rich and meaningful in their daily lives. The conversation will be open to the ways Luther's theology impacts participants' sense of identity, liberty and justice.

Plenary III: Enfleshing Freedom in the Virtual Public Square: Activism, Hope, and the Body of Christ

Deanna Thompson, Karis Thompson, Beverly Wallace

In this time of technological revolution there's much talk about how constant digital connections are impacting our embodied, material lives. Some religious scholars talk about life in the digital age as dis-incarnational, a way of being in the world that downplays or discounts our physicality. While liabilities of digitalized lives should not be ignored, new expressions of Christ's freedom are emerging from social bodies whose presence matters both physically and virtually.

Standing in the tradition of reformer Martin Luther who embraced emerging technology as a vehicle to communicate messages of embodied freedom, plenary speakers Deanna Thompson, Beverly Wallace, and Karis Thompson will explore ways in which Christ's freedom is embodied and proclaimed through social bodies—like the Women's March, Black Lives Matter, and Decolonize Lutheranism—that exist in virtual and physical spaces, and the hope that emerges within them. How do our relational networks direct our attentions, establish our accountabilities and enrich and evolve our lives together as the body of Christ?



Plenary IV: The Global Body

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Elaine Neuenfeldt, Stacy Kitahata

Albert "Pete" Pero, in discussing the global economy wrote: "In ecclesiological terms, if the church is the one universal BODY of Christ, this BODY of Christ is divided among active thieves, passive profiteers, and deprived victims." If some parts of the BODY profit from the plundering of other parts, how are we to EMBODY the gospel? Drawing upon wisdom from Lutheran women of the Global South and insights of faith-rooted efforts to love as God loves, we will wrestle together with our call to dismantle exploitative social structures – such as racism, climate colonialism, and economic injustice – while also forging more just, life-giving, and Earth-honoring ways of living together. Participants will engage BODILY and will draw on insights from Global Lutheranism to understand "the way things are," and to imagine how we will build moral-spiritual power for EMBODYING the holy presence in systems and structures through daily life and work.

Concurrent Session Schedule

Monday, June 5

Concurrent Session I ____10:45-12:15

Concurrent Session II _____3:30-5:00

Session I	
Jodi Houge & Phil Gebben Green	
Clare Josef-Maier & Solomon Trimble	
Kris Kvam	Cindy Senarighi
Diane Jacobson	Niveen Sarras
Mary E. Lowe	Courtney Wilder

Session II	
Kiara Jorgenson, et. al	
Regina M. Laroche	
Surekha Nelavala	Caryn Riswold
Amy Carr	Anna Mercedes
Shane R. Brinegar	Marit Trelstad





Concurrent Session I Descriptions

But I Was Not Consumed: Stories of Persistence Through Hard Times

Jodi Houge with Phil Gebben Green

This session focuses on the power of storytelling and the power of listening. Telling the truth sets people free-and the most effective way of communicating the truth is through a story from your life. If you are in the room, listening--you will embody freedom. If you are one of the people telling a story--you will embody freedom. These are not stories to entertain (although they are often entertaining). They are stories of personal transformation which set off connections in the minds and hearts and memories of those listening. Which means--we all get wrapped up in the freedom of the teller. We leave lighter and more connected to the other humans and our own gorgeous lives. Telling the truth sets people free-and the most effective way of communicating the truth is through a story from your life. If you are in the room, listening--you will embody freedom. If you are one of the people telling a story--you will embody freedom. These are not stories to entertain (although they are often entertaining). They are stories of personal transformation which set off connections in the minds and hearts and memories of those listening. Which means--we all get wrapped up in the freedom of the teller. We leave lighter and more connected to the other humans and our own gorgeous lives.

Agonies in Child-Bearing: Reproductive loss, Martin Luther, and Us

Kris Kvam

In 1542, Martin Luther described ways to respond to women who, in his terms, "have suffered such agony and heartbreak in child-bearing." This session explores understandings and responses to procreative loss in Luther's day and in our own contexts.

Concurrent Session I Descriptions

Coming Home to the Body: an Experience of Presence

Cindy Senarighi

It has been said that Christianity has the highest theology of the body, and the lowest practice. Yoga has come to the Western world primarily through one limb of yoga, asana, attempting to settle thoughts and leave behind the Spirit.

Martin Luther said, “Heavy thoughts bring on physical maladies; when the soul is oppressed so is the body.” Coming home to the body is an experience of God’s healing presence, a return to wholeness. In this presentation we will explore what means to come home to the body as people of faith and how we can experience God’s healing presence anywhere, anytime through a simple Yogadevotion practice.

Experiencing Mary's Magnificat with Luther

Diane Jacobson

This session will invite us into a group activity centered around Luke 1:46-55. Together we will read, sing, and delve into Mary’s Magnificat. One of our guides will be Martin Luther’s commentary on the Magnificat, published in 1521. We will consider Luther’s, Luke’s, and Mary’s relationship to power and compare it to our own. And we will explore the many ways the Magnificat has shaped our common and ever reforming faith.



Concurrent Session I Descriptions

Dinah the Daughter of Jacob and Her Right to Choose

Niveen Sarra

The story of Dinah and Shechem in Genesis 34 has divided scholars. Some argue that Dinah was raped and others believe that she was married to Shechem. In my article, I will demonstrate that Dinah and Shechem had interfaith marriage which was considered a shameful act by Dinah's brothers. I will interpret the narrative from Palestinian perspective on interfaith marriage and its effect on Christian women. That is said, I will talk about freedom to choose marriage partner and how Christian women are ostracized like Dinah by their family if they choose interfaith marriage.e.

The United of Body-Mind in Embodied Cognition and its Usefulness for Theologies of Embodiment

Mary Lowe

This session introduces research from the field of embodied cognition that demonstrates the unity of body-mind. We will explore how we can re-imagine the coherence of our own body-minds and re-conceive the unified body-mind of Jesus Christ.

Concurrent Session I Descriptions

Disability: Revisiting the Catechism

Courtney Wilder

The session "Luther and Disability? Revisiting the Catechism" will explore Luther's catechisms as a religious resource for people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities. Despite some problematic writing on disability in other texts, Luther's characterization of both baptism and salvation in his catechisms offer accounts of faith and the relationship of human beings to God that are rich, underutilized resources for recognizing faith in people with cognitive disabilities.

Women and Justice Social Statement

Clare Josef-Maier and Solomon Trimble

Join Women and Justice Task Force members Clare Josef-Maier and Solomon Trimble for a discussion on *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations toward a Social Statement*. The ELCA is currently developing a social statement on women and justice. This session will look at the study resource and invite all to share their reflections on where they have encountered sexism in their own lives.



Concurrent Session II Descriptions

And Also a Mother: the Question of 'Having It All' with Work & Family Life

Kiara Jorgenson et. al.

A panel of ordained & lay professionals discuss the merits and relevance of Anne-Marie Slaughter's recent research on work/life balance among mothers.

To Touch the Body of the Earth

Regina M. LaRoche

This session is a collection of one farmer's stories along with guided group embodied experiences to help us encounter Earth's holiness, cries, and invitations to justice. Regina draws on her audience/participants as well as her life as a micro-farmer, storyteller/dancer, retreat facilitator, and daughter of the African Diaspora to invite us creatively into important questions of Spirit and faithful living. Please bring water, a yoga mat (if you have one), a journal, and openness to gentle movement of spirit and body (no previous experience necessary).

Female Bodies, Impurities and Shame: An Indian Hermeneutical Reading of Mark 5: 21-43

Surekha Nelavala

In Indian Context and culture, women are treated as essentially impure beings. Dominant religious culture affirms the same and makes women volunteer to accept their own impurity. In this presentation I will critically discuss the norms related to bodies and impurities in Indian Culture and use it as a lens to read the story of the hemorrhaging woman, and her encounter with Jesus.

Concurrent Session II Descriptions

Being Woman: Embodied Freedom in Three Parts

Caryn Riswold

As feminists have long asserted, the personal body is inextricable from the political. The personal body has skin that is raced, a brain that is conditioned, and genitals that are gendered. The politicized body is then stratified by race, socialized into norms, and sexualized by patriarchy. Through the lens of three pivotal and provocative women, I will explore theological implications of the freedom and limitations found in the embodied nature of being woman.

Finding Freedom in the Desecrated Body of Christ: The "Happy Exchange" and Anfechtung between Corporate Sin and Redemption

Amy Carr

The desecrating effects of clergy sexual abuse and other kinds of betrayal on ecclesial bodies expose the depth to which we are knit together in local forms of the body of Christ, where we corporately share in sin's contagion and healing. We will consider how three Lutheran themes illuminate and are illuminated by spiritual desecration in congregational bodies: the "priesthood of all believers" as locus of victimization and healing; the "happy exchange," here between a congregant/congregation's sense of pollution and Christ's holiness; and Anfechtung (affliction/temptation), which names spiritual disorientation as part of the journey of faith after shared trauma.

Good Bodies of Bad People

Marit Trelstad

This interactive presentation explores a provocative tension in Luther's writings concerning human nature, bodily and spiritual. He glories in the body and everyday tasks and relationships as being part of a good creation; nonetheless, he holds to a strong doctrine about the depravity of human nature. This tension of bad people with good bodies will be explored in this session.

Concurrent Session II

Descriptions

Bold Sins in Time of Colony

Anna Mercedes

In the early modern era as Christian empires colonized and missionized vast portions of the globe, the colonizers' sexualized and racialized delineations of sin functioned to establish the boundaries of Christian identity. Meanwhile in Germany, Luther was counseling Melanchthon to "sin boldly," for "God does not save imaginary sinners." Though Luther was also all too ready to point out the sin of others, his injunction to Melanchthon serves as the muse in this session for our exploration of counter-imperial embodied theology.

Luther's Eucharistic Ethic and the Vocation of the Ecclesial Body in the World

Shane R. Brinegar

During the Reformation, Martin Luther recovered the notion of sacrament as testament and free gift to the liturgical assembly for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. In receiving this sacramental gift however, the ecclesial body is sacramentally grafted to one another and called to bear each other's burdens caring for the needs of our neighbor. This eucharistic ethic that emerges from receiving the sacrament as gift frees us and calls us not only to serve our neighbor in the liturgical assembly but to care for those on the margins of our assemblies to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and to protest injustice in the wider social body, bearing witness to the in-breaking of God's reign by lives of loving service and self-giving. This session will explore the vocation of the ecclesial body in the world.



Presenter Biographies

The **Rev. Dr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar** is a professor of theology at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. In 2006, Anderson-Rajkumar was elected as Vice President of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India – the first woman to do so. Her published writings – including essays, chapters, and books – focus on feminist theology, gender, and female bodies.

Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth serves as professor of philosophy at Mount Mary University, a small Catholic university for women, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dragseth is the editor of *The Devil's Whore: Reason and Philosophy in the Lutheran Tradition*, (Fortress Books, 2011. Reprint IA Books, 2015), and the author of *Thinking Woman: A Philosophical Approach to the Quandary of Gender* (Cascade Books, 2015).

Ms. Stacy D. Kitahata, brings more than 25 years of global intercultural experience with faith communities, grass roots organizations and higher education. Kitahata served on the task force focusing on women in the church at the formation of the ELCA and later worked as Associate Director for Global Education. Kitahata served as Dean of Community at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago followed by teaching Intercultural Studies on the faculty of Trinity Lutheran College, as well as directed the Center for Community Engagement. Currently, as Program Director with the Krista Foundation for Global Citizenship in Seattle, Washington, Kitahata develops intercultural experiential learning within an adaptive faith leadership context.

Ms. Regina M. Laroche is a dancer, singer, storyteller, and founder of Diaspora Arts. Her dance background combines modern dance and Afro-Caribbean Rhythms. In her current work, Laroche combines improvisational dance, story, and spiritual direction to grow community and creative embodied spirituality. Laroche resides on Madeline Island, Wisconsin.

Presenter Biographies

Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda is an author of multiple books and articles on Christian ethics. Her research combines Earth ethics, liberation and eco-feminist theologies, climate justice in relation to race and class, and moral agency and hope. Moe-Lobeda currently serves as Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California.

The **Rev. Dr. Elaine Neuenfeldt** is the executive secretary for Women in Church and Society of the Lutheran World Federation. While she is currently based in Geneva, Switzerland, Neuenfeldt is a native of Brazil where she earned her Masters of Divinity and doctorate in theology at the Instituto Ecumênico de Pós-Graduação in São Leopoldo, Brazil. Neuenfeldt has written Bible studies, as well as works examining violence and sexuality.

The **Rev. Leila Ortiz** grew up in the Pentecostal tradition before later becoming Lutheran. Ortiz received her Masters of Divinity from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and is currently a doctoral candidate in Systematic/Contemporary Theology. She serves as an Assistant to the Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod where her focus includes mobility and candidacy. Ortiz has also served as a representative at two Lutheran World Federation gatherings.

Ms. Karis Thompson works with Redeemer Center for Life + Redeemer Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, pursuing strategies to preserve affordable housing within a gentrifying neighborhood, and in Fargo, North Dakota, consulting with Forecast Public Art to develop a public art plan for the City of Fargo, and co-organizing GROUP THINK, a platform for public dialogue. Thompson earned an M.A. in Congregational Mission and Leadership from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and received fellowships through the Creative Community Leadership Institute, Next City Vanguard, Forum for Theological Exploration and Fulbright.

Presenter Biographies

Dr. Terra Schwerin Rowe teaches writing and theology at Marist College and Wartburg Theological Seminary respectfully. Her most recent book *Toward a Better Worldliness: Ecology, Economy and the Protestant Tradition* explores how the Lutheran theology of grace can influence one's thoughts on economic and ecological injustice.

Dr. Deanna A Thompson is a professor of Religion at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. In addition to religion courses, she teaches courses in African American Studies, Women Studies, and Social Justice. Awarded Faculty of the Year by students and colleagues, Thompson speaks widely on topics ranging from Martin Luther and feminism to faith and hope in the midst of illness to being the church in the digital age. She is the author of four books, the latest of which is *The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World* (Abingdon 2016).

The Rev. Dr. Beverly Wallace is currently serving as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Shaw University Divinity School in Raleigh, North Carolina – the oldest Historically Black University in the South, which also celebrates the history of the first dormitory for women in the United States. Wallace's writings center on Womanist theology, race and ethnicity and pastoral care reflections – especially on the topic of grief.

Ms. Michon Weeks is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. A native of Iowa, Weeks received her B.A. in Art and Design from Iowa State University before obtaining her M.F.A. in Drawing and Painting from the University of Minnesota. Much of Weeks' work explores themes of class, culture, and religion. A way in which Weeks further incorporates religion into her art is by combining familiar objects with sacred texts. Her work has been exhibited at the Minnesota Museum of American Art, the Rochester Art Center, the Phipps Center for the arts the Plains Museum of Art, and the Waterloo Museum of Art.



Embodied Freedom Covenant

Being joined by a covenant in a Christian context means coming together, guided by the Gospel. At Embodied Freedom we are coming together to grow together as a community in ways that will continue to live on past this event in the connections we make with each other and the new lessons we learn. As Christians, we know that we are called to treat others with the respect and kindness we would want for ourselves, the respect and kindness that we merit as children of God.

As members of the body of Christ, let us commit to enriching each other's experiences, treating everyone with gracious respect, and not turning a blind eye when we see injustice. In the event that an attendee behaves in a way that is deemed illegal, unsafe, disruptive, or discriminatory, or causes excessive discomfort to another person, their presence will no longer be allowed at the event.

