



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

Office of the  
General Secretary

To LWF Member Churches

[lutheranworld.org](http://lutheranworld.org)

Geneva, 22 September 2017

Respected church leaders, dear sisters and brothers,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I write this letter to you as we are a month away from October 31, 2017, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

It is amazing to see all the events, programs that are being implemented by Lutheran churches all over the world. Many of these activities involve ecumenical partners. All this underlines that reformation is today global, that it is ongoing, and that indeed this is the right time to approach the anniversary with a spirit of ecumenical accountability.

I ask you to please keep sharing with us your plans and activities! We want to tell about them globally through our various communication means ([reformationstories@lutheranworld.org](mailto:reformationstories@lutheranworld.org)).

The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation finds us in a time of much turmoil, insecurity and change. For many people the question about the future seems to be a burdensome one, fraught with anxiety and fears about peace in our world, about the ecological degradation and what it may mean for our children. There is concern among many about where we may end up if the narcotic effects of indifference continue undermining the awareness of our interdependency, both within the human family and with God's creation at large.

Precisely because of this context, I couldn't think of a better time to be the church. We hold the powerful message of Jesus Christ in our hands, which we are called to share: we are saved not because of who we are and what we do, but because of who God is and what God does. There is good news to announce therefore: we are liberated to a life of thankful response to God's gift of salvation. As a response to the gift of Christ there is so much we can do: addressed by God with love, compassion and mercy, we are empowered to become ambassadors of peace, justice and reconciliation in our world. We are freed to serve!

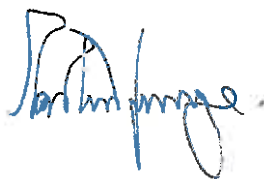
As you finalize preparations for your activities and programs, as well as your festive worships of commemoration, we begin to lift our eyes to what comes next. "500 years weren't enough...", I have heard a Lutheran church saying. It is a phrase that indicates the church's readiness and eagerness to move on into the century ahead of us. Rightly

so: Because God is alive, God continues addressing us, saving and freeing us. That's why the church has a mission, and that's why Reformation is ongoing.

I am offering a link to a shortened version of the liturgy we used during the Sunday worship at the Twelfth Assembly of the LWF, during which we commemorated the Reformation at a global level. It may support your churches and your congregations as they plan their own worship services on or around the Reformation Day.  
(<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-reformation-sunday-liturgy-2017> )

May God bless your activities, and, your commemoration services. May God bless the ongoing journey and witness of your church.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin Junge". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Rev. Dr Martin Junge  
General Secretary