

Nailing Theses

Activity - Outside the Parking Lot Door

When he posted his 95 *Theses* on the Wittenberg church door, Martin Luther intended to begin a conversation on how to reform the church. In particular, he wanted the church to return to a proper understanding of God's grace and forgiveness as a gift, rather than something for sale.

Lutherans today believe the church is always in need of reforming. After all, it's made up of sinful human beings like us!

What do you think needs to be reformed today? How can you help the church remember that it's still all about Jesus?



Coloring Pages

Craft - Fellowship Hall

Martin Luther and his wife Katie lived for many years in the "Lutherhaus," a building in Wittenberg formerly called the "Black Monastery."

The Luthers had a busy household. In addition to their six children, Luther's students and visitors would often stay for supper. They were so dedicated to learning from him that they took detailed notes of the dinner conversation, preserved today as six volumes of *Table Talk*.

This quote is from a dinner conversation in 1532: "God knows, I never thought of going as far as I did. I intended only to attack indulgences. If anybody had said to me when I was at the Diet of Worms, 'In a few years you'll have a wife and your own household,' I wouldn't have believed it."



Luther Rose Cookies

Snack - Fellowship Hall, by Kitchen

Martin Luther's seal, the "Luther Rose," is a visual way of understanding the Christian faith.

The black cross reminds us of our sin and how Jesus died on the cross to save us.

The red heart reminds us Jesus shed his blood for us to give us life forever.

The white rose reminds us that faith gives us joy, comfort, and peace.

The blue background reminds us of the sky and the promise that one day we'll meet Jesus in heaven.

The gold ring on the outside is endless, like our eternal life, and precious, like the joy of heaven.



Luther Rose Tattoos

Activity - Fellowship Hall, near Elevator Shaft

During the Reformation, Martin Luther's seal, the "Luther Rose," was often printed on the title page of his writings. Today, it is a popular symbol of Lutherans around the world.

500 years after the Reformation started in Germany, there are around 80 million Lutherans around the world, and the number is still rising!

The largest Lutheran church bodies in the world are in Ethiopia (7.9 million - up 24% in the last 4 years!) and Tanzania (6.5 million). Here in the United States, our own ELCA has over 3.5 million members, with the Missouri Synod adding another 2 million.

The Reformation has spread a long way from its German roots 500 years ago!



Photo Booth

Activity - Coat Rack Area

We don't have any pictures of Martin Luther, because there were no cameras 500 years ago! However, we do have many paintings and drawings of what he looked like, thanks to artist Lucas Cranach the Elder.

Cranach helped the Reformation spread by drawing pictures that everyone could understand. He even included himself and Martin Luther in some of his paintings of Bible stories!

We still use pictures to tell stories today, often on social media. Share your fun Reformation Day pictures online, and tag @stpetergreene and #Reformation500. Maybe you'll help someone else learn about the Reformation too!



Card Stamping

Craft - Conference Room

Martin Luther's many writings spread quickly all over Germany thanks to an important new invention - the printing press.

Before the printing press, books had to be copied by hand, which took a long time! The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg, made copying and printing much, much faster.

Between 1518-1520, over 300,000 copies of Luther's works were printed, making him the most-published author in Europe just two years into the Reformation. Luther's complete works (in German) fill 121 volumes, over 80,000 pages!

15 of those volumes are Luther's German Bible, also produced on the new printing press.



Decoding Scripture

Activity - Fellowship Hall

One of the big problems before the Reformation was that the Bible was only written in Latin. Just like today, most people couldn't read Latin!

Martin Luther wanted everyone to be able to read the Bible for themselves. After all, the Bible is God's word for everyone! So, in just 11 weeks, Luther translated the entire New Testament into German, a language the common people could read. Later, he also translated the Old Testament.

Thanks to a new invention, the printing press, Luther's Bible quickly spread throughout Germany. It sold thousands of copies in just weeks, becoming so popular that it helped standardize the modern German language.

Most importantly, it let everyone read God's word for themselves!



Origami Churches

Craft - Fellowship Hall

Martin Luther helped the church refocus on what really matters - the good news of Jesus Christ. Rather than performing empty rituals in a language no one could understand, Luther and his followers made the preaching of the Gospel in plain, understandable language the center of the worship service.

Lutheran church buildings today are designed around this idea. They focus on the pulpit (where we receive Jesus through hearing), the communion table (where we receive Jesus in the sacraments), and the baptismal font (where Jesus welcomes us into his family, the church).

The church building is important because it points us to Jesus!



Pin the Theses on the Door

Game - Fellowship Hall, Outside Conference Room

The Reformation started on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted his 95 *Theses* on the door of his church in Wittenberg, Germany. In those days, the church door was a kind of town bulletin board. When you wanted someone to know something, you posted it on the door there in the town square for everyone to see.

Luther's original goal was to have a debate about whether or not the church should sell indulgences - pieces of paper saying people's sins were forgiven. He wanted everyone to know his opinions - all 95 of them! Little did he know what would happen when he made that first post on the door.



Coins in the Coffer

Game - Sanctuary Steps

In Martin Luther's day, some people taught that if you gave the church money, you could go to heaven faster when you died. One priest named Johann Tetzel famously said, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." (A "coffer" is a box for holding money.)

Martin Luther knew better. He knew that we don't need to pay money to God to earn forgiveness and get to heaven, because God's forgiveness is a free gift from God to each of us!

Today we still give offering in church, but we do it to say "Thank you" to God for the free gifts God has already given to us. There's no need to try to buy what God gives us for free!



Trivia

Final Adult Activity - Fellowship Hall, by Screen

For the last 15 minutes of our Reformation 500 festival, all adults and youth are challenged to come test your knowledge of Martin Luther and the Reformation, the Bible, and our own congregation. Prizes for top three winners!

Finally, we'll come back together for a potluck!

Luther Storytelling

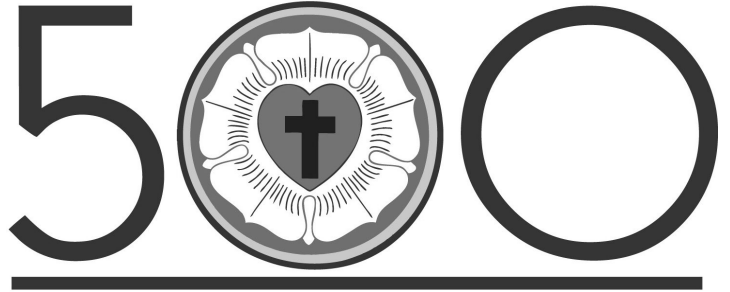
Final Children's Activity - Sanctuary

For the last 15 minutes of our Reformation 500 festival, all children are invited to go to the sanctuary to learn more about Martin Luther's life as we read the book *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World*.

Finally, we'll come back together for a potluck!

St. Peter Lutheran Church

Reformation



Activity Guide

October 29, 2017