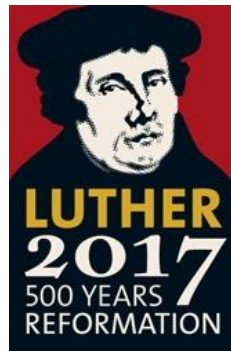


## The Luther Decade

When Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses for debate on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, he couldn't have known that his action would change the world. As we approached the year 2000, LIFE magazine ranked it the third most important event of the millennium. The Reformation's impact was not limited to the church; it also encompassed music and art, the economy and the social order, language and law. Almost every aspect of human life was affected by the Reformation.

The Luther Decade is an international emphasis leading up to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation on October 31, 2017. Each year has a theme highlighting one part of the Reformation legacy.

- 2008 Opening of the Luther Decade
- 2009 Reformation and Confession
- 2010 Reformation and Education
- 2011 Reformation and Freedom
- 2012 Reformation and Music
- 2013 Reformation and Tolerance
- 2014 Reformation and Politics
- 2015 Reformation - Image and Bible
- 2016 Reformation and One World
- 2017 Reformation Anniversary



What began in Wittenberg in the sixteenth century changed Germany, Europe, and the world. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation will be commemorated by a global community of over 70 million Lutherans, from Tierra del Fuego to Finland and from South Korea to North America. How will you be a part of it?

Additional information available at  
[www.elca.org/wittenberg](http://www.elca.org/wittenberg)

## Reformation and Freedom Luther Decade Focus for 2011

*"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.  
A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."  
Martin Luther, The Freedom of a Christian, 1520*

When Luther wrote these words, he realized that they sounded contradictory. How can a Christian be free and a servant at the same time? Luther pointed to Jesus as our example. Although Christ is the Son of God, he willingly chose to serve - and even to die - for our sake.



Political freedom and personal freedom are important, but the Reformation understanding of freedom is even deeper. For Luther, baptism is the foundation of freedom. Being freed *from* the power of sin, death, and the devil, Christians are freed *for* lives of loving service of others. Our relationship with God and our relationships with each other are no longer relationships of "got to" but of "get to." For freedom Christ has set us free!

*"To appreciate and use Baptism aright, we must draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or conscience oppress us, and we must retort, "But I am baptized! And if I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body."*

*Martin Luther, The Large Catechism, 1529*