WEEK OF LENT 1:
TEN COMMANDMENTS
The constraints of a midweek service do not permit detailed explanation of all the commandments. A preacher would do well to focus on the first commandment and the call to have no other gods than the true God of ancient Israel. From this relationship flows our calling to serve God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. In this time of increased conversation with other denominations, preachers might alert listeners to the difficulty of referring to commandments merely by number, since not all denominations follow the same numbering system. In a time when we often hear talk about “gods” or “idols” to define the popularity of contemporary entertainers or sports heroes, perhaps a renewal of what these words really mean in the context of our faith is in order.

GATHERING
Lord, keep us steadfast in your word
ELW 517, LBW 230

DIALOGUE
Psalm 1:1-6

READINGS
Exodus 20:1-17
Large Catechism: “Conclusion of the Ten Commandments” (Book of Concord 429:324-325)

HYMN OF THE DAY
God's word is our great heritage
ELW 509, LBW 239

SENDING
All praise to thee, my God, this night
ELW 565, LBW 278

WEEK OF LENT 2:
APOSTLES’ CREED
The creed helps us know more about the God we serve, reminding us of the nature and work of God, the sending of Jesus to redeem us, and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the believer. Consider the role of a creed in contemporary life and the specific role of this creed for Christians. We enter the church through a baptism grounded in this creedal statement and journey through life mindful of living in the presence of the holy Trinity. This service gives the preacher a chance to consider the trinitarian foundation of our Christian faith by reviewing the many ways we see this God at work in our world and in our lives.

GATHERING
Lord, keep us steadfast in your word
ELW 517, LBW 230

DIALOGUE
Profession of Faith (ELW, pp. 235, 237)

READINGS
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Large Catechism: “The Creed” (Book of Concord 431:5-8)

HYMN OF THE DAY
We all believe in one true God
ELW 411, LBW 374

SENDING
O Trinity, O blessed Light
ELW 571, LBW 275
THE CHURCH'S JOURNEY IN ART AND SONG

HOW TO ADAPT AND CONTEXTUALIZE A HYMN FESTIVAL FOR LOCAL USE DURING 2017 AND BEYOND

It is often said that the Lutheran church is a singing church. Singing by the gathered people of God, while not unique to Lutherans, is a hallmark of who we are. Lutherans have a rich tradition of the visual arts, as well. In a Lutheran understanding, both of these artistic forms can rightly be used to communicate the word of God and, therefore, when joined together, can be a rich way of commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. However, music and visual art did not begin in sixteenth century Germany, nor did they end there. These art forms are lively and ever-evolving. We do well, therefore, to integrate music and art from many times, places, and peoples moved by the same Spirit to fully observe this forthcoming anniversary.

Reformation 500 Sourcebook: Anniversary Resources for Congregations will include materials for congregations or synods to use in creating a festival of art and song that will lead participants on a journey—not a chronological or linear journey, but, rather, a journey exploring some of the themes of the Reformation: How do we gather as the church? For what do we give thanks and for what do we repent? Because of God's reconciling mercy, how do we rejoice? How is God calling us into the future?

Participants at the ELCA's 2015 Worship Jubilee, “Called to Be a Living Voice,” gathered together at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta to experience one manifestation of this Journey. At that event, the songs were as diverse as the church itself, including:

- A Mighty Fortress; Now Thank We All Our God (German)
- Built on a Rock (Scandinavian)
- Gather Us In; Give Us Clean Hands; The Church; O Blessed Spring (Contemporary)
- Jesus, We Are Gathered; Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading (African)
- Mirad cuán Bueno; Tú diste a Israel (Latino)
- Taste and See; I Will Rejoice (African American)
- Come Now, O Prince of Peace (Asian)
- Ubi caritas et amor (Chant)
- Amazing Grace (English/American)

These songs were led by an equally diverse team of musicians, yet everyone gathered joined in singing as the church together. Visual artwork accompanying the singing was equally diverse. Four moments of reflection were interspersed, including excerpts of writings from throughout the centuries.
From the Atlanta event, the *Reformation 500 Sourcebook* will include:

- the complete order of songs with the stanzas sung;
- graphic (TIF) files for the songs not in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and for those songs for which selected stanzas will be sung;
- commentary on how musicians might lead the singing in ways suited to the musical style;
- a link to video recordings of the commentary read by four different voices;
- a link to the archive of the live-stream, which can be used to experience the various musical styles;
- a link to the electronic files containing the artwork that accompanied the singing;
- information on how to obtain copyright permission for these songs and artwork.

The community gathered in Atlanta for the first experience of this Journey was unique: together for only a few days, representing worshiping communities from across the whole church with all their different musical vocabularies, resources, histories, and pieties. Those who plan to recreate this Journey during the 2017 anniversary will have different communities. Some may decide to use the songs, art, and commentary used in Atlanta. Others may customize the program for their particular context. Perhaps some will add additional parts for choirs and brass. Others may simplify for use with more modest musical resources. Some may have the commentaries spoken by a live person, while others may use the video clips provided. Some may choose to substitute different hymns or songs from those sung in Atlanta. Some may use the artwork files as they are presented, even when substitute songs are sung. Some may choose to not use artwork at all or to use local art instead. Some may choose to enhance with additional arts, such as dance, drama, poetry, and photography. The possibilities are plentiful.

In addition to what is provided from the Atlanta event, *Reformation 500 Sourcebook* will provide:

- an extensive compilation of alternative hymns and songs that adhere closely to the themes of the original choices;
- the text of the commentaries, if it is desired to have these spoken live rather than using the video clips.
- source information for related instrumental parts, concertato or stanza settings, and so forth.

Whether local planners craft an event that is similar to the one presented during “Called to Be a Living Voice,” or use alternate songs, differing instrumentation, artwork, and commentary, these resources provide a foundation for commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation through assembly singing and visual art that is grounded in our tradition, expresses the church broadly, is honest, and is always looking forward.
WHO ARE WE LUTHERANS?

The Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession, written in the midst of the Reformation tumult, is the core statement of what Lutherans believe. It was produced in 1530, thirteen years after young professor Martin Luther posted the Ninety-five Theses in Wittenberg. A lot had happened in those thirteen years. Thanks to Luther’s creative exploration of the gospel and its implications, his colorful personality (opponents had other adjectives) and the availability of the printing press, his views on religious matters as well as the politics of the day had been widely distributed. In many parts of central Europe, people were responding favorably, to the consternation of the Church of Rome, which had been accustomed to being the single expression of the Christian church in that region.

In the sixteenth century there was no nation called Germany. Rather, the various duchies and electorates made up a key part of the Holy Roman Empire, a remnant of the European territory once governed by ancient Rome. For much of Reformation times, Charles V governed as Holy Roman Emperor. He had watched his empire become increasingly fractured by divisions among princes favorable to Luther and other reformers, and those who kept their loyalty to Rome and the pope. The emperor needed the princes to be unified, not least because a Turkish invasion of Europe had reached the gates of Vienna. And so, in January 1530, the emperor called for a diet, or general assembly, in the German city of Augsburg. He asked the German princes and imperial cities to explain their religious convictions.
LEARNING ABOUT THE REFORMATION
in Today’s World

LEARNING FOR ADULTS
The *Reformation 500 Sourcebook* will provide many resources to assist congregations in observing the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. In our increasingly diverse world, though, many people who attend Lutheran congregations are seeking to know more about the teachings, the faith practices, and the story of this church.

- What was the Reformation, and how has it affected Christians of all labels?
- What do we mean by “the word of God”? How does it help us deal with everyday life? How do Lutherans read the Bible?
- What are Lutheran perspectives on worship and the arts, on education and the sciences?
- How does God’s good news lead us so strongly into our everyday vocations, into serving others, into proclaiming that gospel in word and deed?

These are just a few of the questions that will be addressed in a compelling, colorful study book available by mid-2016. Congregations will find it suitable for group study not only in connection with this anniversary but as an ongoing resource for introducing people to the Lutheran church, with an accompanying leader guide. Individuals and families will also find it attractive as something to help remember this major anniversary.

LEARNING FOR CHILDREN
Children, too, benefit from learning about our Lutheran roots, and so a lively and colorful resource for middle-elementary learners is in preparation. Accompanied by a leader guide, it will open up a basic understanding of the way God’s good news frees us to live, and how Martin Luther and his friends lifted up that good news for us all.
Congregations that observe their own anniversaries know that it takes time to plan. They often start a year or more ahead of time. Although the anniversary date itself falls in October 2017, it’s not too early to begin planning how you will bring life to this observance in ways suitable to your context.

- Identify a group of leaders to carry this task forward. What areas of congregational life will be included?
- Who will make up this group? Consider including people of a variety of ages and especially young people, who will carry the gifts of the Reformation into the next five hundred years. Think not only of “cradle Lutherans” but also those who are new to the Lutheran church.
- Once your group is assembled, identify the goals and hoped-for outcomes for this anniversary in your setting. Be realistic and mindful of how it will best enhance your ongoing mission and ministry.
- Identify the time frame for your observance. Will it be the church year beginning with Advent 2016? One year from Reformation 2016 to Reformation 2017? Only the fall of 2017?
- Discuss possible events and activities using questions and ideas such as the following.
- Will Reformation emphases be woven into regular Sunday worship throughout the time frame of your observance? Or will you plan mainly for a given month or day?
- How will music enliven your observance? Will you learn hymns and songs, whether new or from the heritage? What might challenge and delight your choirs or other ensembles?
- Will you join voices with other Christians in an event designed for ecumenical participation?
- Begin to collect information about learning resources to explore for use with adults and youth.
- Consider approaches designed for conversation with people from other Christian traditions.
- How are young people preparing for affirmation of baptism encountering the Reformation? How might people of all ages engage with Luther’s catechisms during this time?
- How will your children learn the story of God’s love also through the Reformation story?
- How will your congregation observe the ELCA’s “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday in 2016 and 2017?
- What activities can extend the work Lutherans do to serve our neighbors, to care for creation, and to seek justice and peace throughout the earth?
- How can you prepare to communicate effectively to people in your community during a year when there will be media interest in the question, “Who are the Lutherans?”
- Hospitality, including festive food and fellowship, often accompanies events and activities such as those described above. Planning a gracious welcome for visitors and ecumenical guests may take on special importance.
- Hospitality plans can certainly include an aspect of fun associated with local or cultural traditions. Consider also how to lift up the Lutheran emphasis of the wide welcome of God’s grace and mercy that transcends narrow cultural characteristics in order to embrace the whole world and its peoples.
In addition to the Reformation 500 resources in preparation that are described in this sampler, here are some other resources to explore.

**One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ**

available at augsburgfortress.org

Here is a rich ecumenical resource for congregations, especially Roman Catholic and Lutheran communities. By gathering together to reflect on its contents, Christians will foster the church’s unity on a grassroots level and grow in their awareness of the ways that unity already exists.

**From Conflict to Communion**

available at elca500.org

The Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity invites all Christians to study its report and to walk along the path toward the full, visible unity of the church. Free, downloadable document and study guide available.

**The Freedom of a Christian**

available at augsburgfortress.org

This new translation of Luther’s treatise brings alive the revolutionary zeal and theological boldness of the Reformation era.

**The Annotated Luther Series**

available at fortresspress.com

Volume 1 contains writings that defined the roots of reform set in motion by Martin Luther, beginning with the Ninety-five Theses (1517). Six volumes are planned for release over the next several years.

http://www.elca500.org/

This site lifts up the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Reformation observances and facilitates connections among ELCA partners, networks, and expressions. Find news and resources, explore upcoming events, and share your own ideas and activities.

https://2017.lutheranworld.org/

Connect with Lutherans around the globe at the Lutheran World Federation’s Reformation anniversary site under the theme “Liberated by God’s Grace.”
Look inside this sampler for a content overview of the forthcoming *Reformation 500 Sourcebook*, including sample materials, an overview of other planned resources for children and adults, and a planning checklist—the perfect place to get started!

**Reformation 500 Sourcebook:**
Anniversary Resources for Congregations

As congregations plan the ways they will observe the Reformation's five hundredth anniversary, this Sourcebook will be an essential guide. Gathered in this Sourcebook will be a variety of ideas for planning worship services, education events, music festivals, service projects, and connections with other Christians. A CD-ROM of reproducible, customizable content is also included. Available June 2016.

978-1-5064-0637-4 | $29.00

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