



President Robert Bugbee

Praying towards “Reformation 500”

Soon it will be Reformation Day, 2016. That marks 499 years since the moment when a little-known German monk, Martin Luther, posted his 95 Theses on the door of Wittenberg’s Castle Church. They were a public appeal to discuss and debate. Those theses touched off a series of events that turned the church and the world upside down.

After this Reformation Day, we enter the 500th Anniversary Year of Luther’s Reformation, which will culminate in large-scale commemorations in October, 2017. Christians in many places will mark the event with services, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, books and articles. Our own Lutheran Church-Canada recently launched a special website—www.reformation2017.ca—described elsewhere in this magazine (see page 17).

I appeal to you individual believers and your church families not merely to gear up toward “Reformation 500” with plans and events. I’m asking you, above all, to pray your way toward this milestone. In this column I want to leave you with a few prayer thoughts you may use together with me. (Feel free to go ahead and tear this page out. Fold it into the back of your Bible or somewhere else you’ll see it repeatedly. I hope it will nudge all of us toward marking this anniversary year with prayer.)

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Christ Alone: Thank God that He sent His Son to be your Rescuer out

of sheer undeserved mercy. Praise Him for giving you faith to cling to Christ. Ask Him to keep you from taking the blessing of Christ’s saving Good News for granted.

Scripture Alone: Bless the Lord for the Reformation gift of a Bible in your own language. Ask Him to move believers and your local church to teach and preach with faithfulness to Scripture. Implore the Lord to bless your congregation with hunger for the Word, and to provide strong Bible class teaching. Pray that God would give you the heart to read and ponder Scripture every day at home, and to overcome neglects in this area.

Repentance: Pray that the Holy Spirit would kindle in you true sorrow over your sins and failings, and give you the heart to confess them without excuse-making. Ask Him to move you beyond mere regret that you got “caught” or that certain things didn’t turn out well, and to give you honest repentance for having grieved the Lord and hurt other people at times.

Holy Ministry: Thank God for the gift of pastors and preachers to proclaim Christ. Ask Him to make them faithful to God’s Word. Pray that they be filled with love for the people under their care. At the same time, beg the Lord to put it into the hearts of a new generation of servants to enter the ministry in this needy time, and ask His blessing on all who teach and learn at our seminaries. Ask our Father also

to stand by congregations who are without a pastor, or who are seeking a faithful one right now.

Mission: Since God gave us His Christ and the Word of His cross to save us, beg the Lord to help your church see its surrounding community as He does, as people He yearns to reach. Pray that He may give your church family clear preaching and a beating heart to attract others who currently do not know Jesus. Ask Him also to send workers and leaders for our missions in Central America, southeast Asia and Ukraine, and to move our churches across Canada to support them with sacrificial gifts.

Courage for Our Time: Because there are strong voices resisting Christian people and our faith these days, implore the Father to give us wisdom and courage to stand with Christ even when it’s not easy. Name especially the youth and young adults from your family and church, that God enables them to be dedicated witnesses in our time, even when it is hard or lonely.

Joy and Steadfastness: Pray that God would give us eyes and heart to see the joy He gives us in being His saved, forgiven children. Ask Him to put down every scheme of the evil one to drown us in frustration or despair. Pray for the gift of steadfastness, to cling in life and death to the Christ Who endured to the end for you.