
FAITH AT THE CROSSROADS

REDISCOVERING THE REFORMATION


Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND

EVENING CELEBRATION PROGRAMME

17th Dublin | 18th Londonderry | 19th Belfast

October 2017

FAITH AT THE CROSSROADS

REDISCOVERING THE REFORMATION



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The actions of Luther and his fellow reformers 500 years ago placed the church and their faith at a crossroads. Do they remain with the established traditions and beliefs or continue to reform?

This evening, we will celebrate and consider the Reformation's impact, legacy and enduring importance, both in Ireland and across the world.

We can know Jesus in a real and personal way.

This is important, because as we consider the reformers' beliefs, it causes each of us to examine our own faith – its basis, and where we stand in relation to Jesus Christ.



Reformatoren Gruppenportrait, 17th Century

WELCOME

WHETHER YOU JOIN us in Abbey Presbyterian Church, Dublin, the Waterside Theatre, Londonderry, or in our Assembly Hall in Belfast, you are very welcome as we commemorate and celebrate the quincentenary of the Reformation with this special worship service, Faith at the Crossroads: Rediscovering the Reformation.

As a Church and as Presbyterians, we have a rich heritage that comes directly out of the Reformation and the reformed tradition. While this in itself is one significant reason to mark what Martin Luther did 500 years ago, there are also deeper and more profound reasons to give thanks.

For at the heart of what we know today as the Reformation is Luther's momentous discovery that a person's salvation, that is being made right with God as if we had never sinned, was secured by believing in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Salvation wasn't achieved by doing good works, or by any other means, but trusting in Jesus' death and God's grace alone.

The reformers emphasised the importance of Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone and the glory of God alone. As disciples of Christ, we give thanks for these Five Solas, the essentials of our own personal journeys – and tonight, may we honour and glorify God in this place, the One who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

In the Lord's service

Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely

*Moderator of the General Assembly
of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

Five Solas

The Five Solas are five Latin phrases that emerged from the Reformation to summarise the reformers' theological principles of Christianity.

SOLA SCRIPTURA
"Scripture alone"

The Bible alone is our highest authority.

SOLA FIDE
"faith alone"

We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

SOLA GRATIA
"grace alone"

We are saved by the grace of God alone.

SOLUS CHRISTUS
"Christ alone"

Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Saviour, and King.

SOLI DEO GLORIA
"to the glory of God alone"

We live for the glory of God alone.



Luther Posting the 95 Theses (Detail)
(also known as Luthers Thesenanschlag)
by Ferdinand Pauwels, 1872

WHO WAS MARTIN LUTHER?



Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach der Ältere, 1529

WHEN LUTHER PENNED his 95 Theses half a millennium ago, he had no idea of the religious and political earthquakes it would produce.

Indeed, he began his life as a dutiful son of the church and had become an Augustinian friar who taught theology at the new University of Wittenberg. These first tremors were felt as Luther responded to what many recognised as an obvious abuse, namely the sale of indulgences by the papacy.

This, however, was only the beginning. In the ensuing disputations that took place in Leipzig and Augsburg the more fundamental idea of authority began to emerge as one of the most pressing questions of the day. Where was the church's source of truth? Why ought something to be believed and practised – on the basis of the church's tradition or because of what Scripture said?

Whilst all of this was taking place in the public square, in private, Luther was a deeply troubled man. One of the reasons why the late medieval church was in such urgent need of reform was because the truth of the gospel was not being heard with clarity. How a sinner received God's grace in Jesus Christ was not exactly clear and this left Luther with a deeply troubled soul. Even though those around him would no doubt have thought him to be devout and religious he was all too aware that he was a sinner who had not found peace with God. Near the end of his life he reflected back on this time and explained that despite his prayers, penance and pilgrimages he knew himself to be held captive in bondage to sin, and that before a holy God he stood guilty and condemned. He recounted how, as he prepared to teach the Epistle to the Romans to his students, God opened his eyes to see the grace of God in the gospel. He came to understand that justification is not a reward for the righteous but instead is a gift that God gives to guilty sinners who take hold of Jesus Christ. Luther described his experience this way:

“At last, meditating day and night and by the mercy of God, I... began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith... Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through gates that had been flung wide open.”

It is vital that we recognise that this was the very epicentre of the Reformation. Within only a few years the Reformation would become enmeshed into complicated political, ecclesiastical and economic realities but, fundamentally, it is about what the Bible says concerning the nature of God's grace in Jesus Christ.



Katharina von Bora by Lucas Cranach der Ältere, 1526

Katharina von Bora
1499-1552

Luther married Katharina von Bora in 1525, a nun who had fled from a convent in Nimbsch, near Grimma, and had taken refuge in Wittenberg.

Together they had six children. Katharina outlived her husband by six years. She died in December, 1552 in Torgau where she had fled from the plague in Wittenberg.

MARTIN LUTHER TIMELINE

1483 Born in Eisleben 10 November	1501-05 Attends University of Erfurt	1505 Enters Augustinian monastery in Erfurt	1510 Makes pilgrimage to Rome	1511 Transfers to the Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg	1517 The promulgation of the 95 Theses	1520 Excommunication and publication of three important Reformation books	1521 Diet of Worms 17-18 April	1521 Exile in Wartburg Castle	1522 Return to Wittenberg	1524 Publishes first hymnal	1525 Marries Katharina von Bora
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95 Theses

Acting on his strong objection to the practice of selling indulgences Luther wrote the 'Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences,' also known as 'The 95 Theses,' a list of questions and propositions for debate. The first two of the theses contained his central idea, that God intended believers to seek repentance and that faith alone, and not deeds, would lead to salvation. The other 93 theses, a number of them directly criticising the practice of indulgences, supported these first two.



Painting of Luther nailing 95 theses by Julius Hübner, 1878



Luther at the Diet of Worms by Anton von Werner der Ältere, 1877

Diet of Worms

A meeting of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's Imperial diet at Worms in 1521, at which Martin Luther was summoned to appear. Luther committed himself there to the cause of Protestant reform, and his teaching was formally condemned in the Edict of Worms.

WHO WAS MARTIN LUTHER?

Events continued apace. Luther was branded a heretic and his life hung in the balance. In the cauldron of the Imperial Diet of Worms, he stood at the very centre of the European stage and stated with absolute clarity that he himself was “*captive to the Word of God*” – the foundation on which he would take his stand was Scripture alone.

Luther was taken into protective custody in Wartburg Castle where he translated the Greek New Testament into German. He returned to Wittenberg where, as he put it, he simply “*taught, preached and wrote God’s Word*” – “*I did nothing; the Word did everything... I let the Word do its work*”. The aftershocks of the Reformation began to transform the life, worship and witness of the church and spread out into a reformation of the family, society, government, work, economics and the arts.

The story of how the Reformation came to Ireland is a complicated one, particularly tied into the various streams of the Reformation and their spread to England and Scotland. The reformed faith did not permeate Irish society in a uniform way. In light of what we have seen one significant reason is surely this: Luther and William Tyndale put the Bible into the hands of the German and English-speaking peoples in the 1530s but it would take another 150 years for a complete Gaelic Bible to be produced.

Luther stands as a towering figure in European history and the truths that shaped his life and work are as relevant to the church in the 21st century as they were in the 16th century. We embrace Luther’s legacy when we look to Jesus Christ alone for salvation as revealed to us in holy Scripture.

Augsburger Konfession 1530 by Remshard,1708



Lutheran Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession contains 28 articles. Of these, 21 represent a positive presentation of the Christian faith as taught in the Lutheran churches while the last seven suggest reforms of the church at that time. Although the ultimate aim of the Confession was to summarise the main teachings of the Bible, it also wished to emphasise the ‘catholic’ (meaning ‘universal’) nature of Lutheran teaching.

1527

Writes the hymn ‘A Mighty Fortress is Our God’

1530

The **Lutheran Augsburg Confession** is written

1534

Publication of complete German Bible

1546

Dies in Eisleben
18 February

REFORMATION GLOSSARY

REFORMATION

Started as an attempt to reform the church from within, but resulted in splits. More of a movement than a moment, the Reformation is the series of events and ideas from across Europe that gave rise to Protestantism. Reformers opposed corruption

such as the abuse of indulgences and emphasised justification by faith, the authority of the Bible and a different understanding of the sacraments. Martin Luther is regarded as a key figure in this.

INDULGENCES

Give money to the church to reduce someone’s time in purgatory.

FROM LUTHER TO IRELAND



Ulrich Zwingli

1484–1531

Led the Swiss Reformation, preaching through the Bible book by book and emphasising a simple faith based on the Bible, with few rituals or traditions.

Attempts to join with Luther to have a single, unified reformed church failed because of disagreements over the Lord’s Supper, which Zwingli saw as purely a symbolic act of remembrance, whereas Luther insisted that Jesus was literally, physically present.



John Calvin

1509–64

Originally a French lawyer, he converted to Protestantism in the early 1530s and had to flee for his life. He ministered in Basel, Geneva and Strasbourg before returning to Geneva permanently in 1541. He called

Luther “my ever-honoured father,” generally preferring his views to Zwingli’s. Under his ministry many people came to Geneva to learn reformed theology and bring it back to their home countries. His writings, particularly his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and his commentaries on the Bible, continue to be influential today.



John Knox

1513–72

Led a colourful life as a priest, translator, tutor, claymore-wielding bodyguard, galley slave and revolutionary. After converting to Protestantism in the late 1530s he ministered throughout Europe, including

Calvin’s Geneva, calling it “the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles.” Returning to Scotland in 1559, he was asked by Parliament to organise the reformation of the Scottish Kirk. This marked the beginning of Presbyterianism in Scotland and it soon spread to Ireland with the first congregation being established at Ballycarry in 1613.



LUTHER’S ROSE

The Luther Rose, also known as the Luther Seal, is one of the most recognised symbols of the Reformation. Martin Luther personally oversaw the creation of this symbol in order to represent his theology.

BLACK CROSS IN A RED HEART

We live by faith in Jesus who saves us by His suffering and death on the cross.

WHITE ROSE

White, the colour of angels and spirits, stands for the joy, comfort and peace that comes from faith.

SKY-BLUE BACKGROUND

We hope for blue skies and they often seem far off, briefly glimpsed through the clouds. This reminds us that our present joy is only the beginning of a future heavenly joy which is not yet fully revealed, but we can grasp in hope.

GOLDEN RING

This golden prize goes on and on without end, like the eternal joys of heaven.

HYMN

A new hymn has been commissioned by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. *Stand Still* is inspired by the life and writings of Martin Luther.

Stand Still

Chris Kennedy and Jonathan Rea

A(add9) A/C# D(add9) D(add9)/F# A A/C# D(add9)

1. Stand

4 A A/C# D A/C# D A/C# A E(sus4) E A A/C#

still be - fore the Lord our God, the High e - ter - nal one. Give glo - ry to His
still when doubts and fears a - rise to Death's tear the soul a part. Keep tru - sting in the
still and do not fear the grave, Death's sting will lose its power. For Christ has fought our

9 D A/C# D D/E E A(sus4) A Bm E D9 A9/C# D D9/F#

Ma - je - sty and praise the Ri - sen Son! Stand still with - in the Fa - ther's love As in His grace we
words of Christ to guard the trou - bled heart. Stand still when dark temp - ta - tions come; Your God can keep you
fin - al foe, His vic - to - ry is ours. Stand still and know that God is near, Our Fa - ther's love is

15 E/G# E A E7/B A/C# C#m7 D9 D A9/C# D F#m E(sus4) E A(sus4) A

hide; The cross has co - vered all our sin and we are ju - sti - fied.
pure. And when the power of sin seems strong, Re - mem - ber grace en - dures.
sure. O Spi - rit keep us to the end, In Christ we stand se - cure.

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2

20 D A C#7 F#m D A/C# Bm/D F#m E(sus4) E D A

Here we stand, Here we'll stay Firm in the True and Li - ving way. Here we stand,

25 C#/G# F#m Bm A/C# A/D E(sus4) F#m E D /E F#m E(sus4) E

Here we'll stay, Christ is e - nough now and al ways, Christ is e - nough for me to -

30 A A/C# D(add9) D(add9)/F# A A/C# D(add9) E A

day! day! me to - day!

Stand still before the Lord our God,
The High Eternal One.
Give glory to His Majesty
And praise the Risen Son!
Stand still within the Father's love
As in His grace we hide;
The cross has covered all our sin
And we are justified.

*Here we stand, here we'll stay
Firm in the True and Living Way.
Here we stand, here we'll stay,
Christ is enough now and always,
Christ is enough for me today!*

Stand still when doubts and fears arise
To tear the soul apart;
Keep trusting in the words of Christ
To guard the troubled heart.
Stand still when dark temptations come;
Your God can keep you pure.
And when the power of sin seems strong,
Remember grace endures.

Stand still and do not fear the grave,
Death's sting will lose its power.
For Christ has fought our final foe,
His victory is ours!
Stand still and know that God is near,
Our Father's love is sure.
O Spirit, keep us to the end,
In Christ we stand secure.

ORDER OF CELEBRATION

Order of celebration

Prelude A Safe Stronghold our God is Still

Approach to God

Welcome/call to worship Rev. Chris Kennedy

Praise Crown Him with Many Crowns

The Lord is my Salvation

Prayers of adoration/confession

Scripture reading Romans 1:16-18; 5:1-5

Video "What really is repentance?"

Reformation hymn Stand Still

Video "Here I stand" (Diet of Worms)

Praise Cornerstone

Table talk Reformation then and now:

Ministry of the Word

Praise A Mighty Fortress is our God

Sermon Dr. Conrad Mbewe

Response to the Word

Solo A Mighty Fortress

Prayers of intercession/supplication – for the church and the world

Praise In Christ Alone

Benediction Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble Mcneely
*Moderator of the Presbyterian
Church in Ireland*

Speaker



DR. CONRAD MBEWE

Dr. Mbewe has served as pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church since 1987 and as principal of the Lusaka Ministerial College. He holds an MA in Pastoral Theology and a PhD in Missions. Among other roles, Dr. Mbewe is the chancellor of the African Christian University in Lusaka and a board member of Covenant College in the eastern province of Zambia. He is also the editor of a theological journal called *Reformation Zambia* which is published three times a year. Dr. Mbewe has been a speaker at the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention.

Praise

Stand Still

Stand still before the Lord our God,
The High Eternal One.
Give glory to His Majesty
And praise the Risen Son!
Stand still within the Father's love
As in His grace we hide;
The cross has covered all our sin
And we are justified.

*Here we stand, here we'll stay
Firm in the True and Living Way.
Here we stand, here we'll stay,
Christ is enough now and always,
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Stand still and know that God is near,
Our Father's love is sure.
O Spirit, keep us to the end,
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ORDER OF CELEBRATION

Prayers

As part of our prayers of Confession, we use the following words taken from the Presbyterian Church's Vision for Society, adopted at the 2016 General Assembly.

WE CONFESS our failure to live as biblically faithful Christian peacebuilders and to promote the counter culture of Jesus in a society where cultures clash.

ACCORDINGLY, WE AFFIRM Christian peacebuilding to be part of Christian discipleship and reassert the Church's calling to pursue a peaceful and just society in our day.

WE SEEK a more reconciled community at peace with each other, where friend and foe, working together for the common good, can experience healing and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen

A prayer for illumination from Psalm 25:4-5

⁴Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.

⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long."

Amen

Scripture readings

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Romans 1:16-18
(NIV)

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5:1-5
(NIV)

²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26
(ESV)

LUTHER'S POUCHES

PART OF LUTHER'S reformed thinking was the need to convey Scripture's riches to children. One way he did this was by giving children two pouches, *faith* and *love*, with Scripture verses inside to memorise. As part of our 500th year celebration, we want to share his tradition.

"Let none think himself too wise for this and despise such child's play. Christ, in order to train men, became a man Himself. If we wish to train children, we must become children with them. Would to God such child's play were widely practiced. In a short time we would have a wealth of Christian people, souls becoming rich in Scripture."

Martin Luther



Firstly, have the children write out the following verses on small pieces of cards or paper

Faith's verses

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men because all sinned.
Romans 5:12

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
Psalm 51:5

The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.
Romans 4:23-4

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
John 1:29

Love's verses:

That we should serve and do good to everyone as Christ has done for us.
Galatians 5:13

What you have done to the least of my brothers, you have done unto me.
Matthew 25:40

Blessed are you when men persecute you for my sake.
Matthew 5:10

The Lord disciplines those he loves.
Hebrews 12:6

Create a pouch or decorate an envelope for them to carry and keep

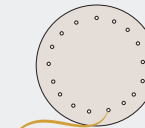
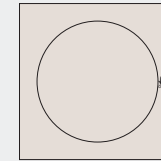
Material pouch

For each pouch you'll need:

- Suitable strong material (leather)
- Hole punch
- Something round (small bowl)
- Scrapbooking eyelets
- Thin ribbon
- Scissors
- Small bowl

Instructions:

- The easiest way to cut a circle is to trace one using a round object (small bowl).
- Cut out the circle you traced.
- Use your hole punch to create holes all around your circle – about an inch apart and make sure to have an odd amount of holes (it helps in the threading).
- Secure an eyelet in each hole – this strengthens the holes.
- Thread each hole with a thin ribbon.
- Once you are finished, you should end in the same hole – on the outside.
- Now you can pull the ribbon tight to create the pouch.
- Place verses inside the pouch and pull closed.



Paper envelope pouch

For each envelope you'll need:

- Blank envelope
- Colouring pens or pencils
- Decorations (glitter, stamps, stickers)

Instructions:

- Label one envelope 'faith', and the other 'love'.
- Decorate the envelopes as you wish with markers, stickers etc.
- Place verses inside.



Encourage the children to frequently look at the verses and memorise them

REFORMATION GLOSSARY

HUMANISM

Beginning in the late 14th century, there was a growing movement to study ancient works of philosophy and culture. Humanists learned to read these in the original languages and translated them so that ordinary people could read and think about them, rather than just elites and authority figures.

Among theologians this led to an interest in early Christianity and translating the Bible, leading to criticism of church authorities. This laid some of the intellectual groundwork for the Reformation.

COUNTER REFORMATION

In response to the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church did undergo some reform, dealing with many of the corrupt practices identified by the reformers, but rejecting their theology.

GREAT SCHISM

The Reformation was not the first time that the church has split. In the 11th century there was a split between Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, mainly over their understanding of the Trinity, particularly how the Holy Spirit relates to the Son. The authority of the Pope relative to other bishops was also a significant dividing issue.

PRAYERS

“TO PRAY...IS to call upon God in every need,” wrote Luther. As for many Christians before and since, prayer was vital to Luther. Prayer wasn’t to be seen as a chore, but in the context of a relationship with God, trusting in Christ. So, we can pray to God “with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father.”

Luther wrote and preached on prayer regularly, and encouraged people to frame their day with prayer. The following prayers are from Luther’s Small Catechism and his devotional writings:

Morning

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You.

For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

Amen

Evening

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night.

For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

Amen

Martin Luther’s prayer

Behold, Lord, I am an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it.

I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.

I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent that my love may go out to my neighbour.

I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether.

O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you

In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have.

I am poor; You are rich and came to be merciful to the poor.

I am a sinner; You are upright.

With me, there is an abundance of sin; in You is the fullness of righteousness.

Therefore I will remain with You, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give

Amen

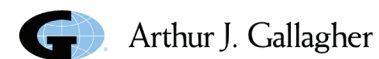
REFORMATION GLOSSARY

JUSTIFICATION

How we are made right with God so that our sin is no longer counted against us and we can instead be declared righteous and able to live forever with God.

REPENTANCE

As he studied scripture in the original Hebrew and Greek languages, Luther realised repentance involves a change of heart and mind before God and a turning away from sin.



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