



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

October 27, 2017

Dear friends in Christ,

*"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)*

On Reformation Day, we gather as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – in our congregations, across this church, and with our Lutheran family around the globe – to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. This centennial has provided a welcome occasion to learn more about Martin Luther and the Reformation, while strengthening our understanding and commitment to our ministries. It has given us an opportunity to look back on the history of our tradition and to discern how we are being called forward together in Christ.

As the first centennial of the Reformation to take place in the context of our church's deep ecumenical and inter-religious partnerships, this anniversary is unfolding in a spirit of reconciliation. Together with our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers, and other ecumenical companions, we have taken significant steps on the way to unity, justice and peace. With our inter-religious neighbors, we also have deepened mutual understanding across religious lines and collaborated for the common good.

Over the course of this year, in initiatives and events across this church and The Lutheran World Federation, we have been inspired by the ways in which Lutherans continue to share boldly the gifts of our tradition. One of these is Martin Luther's insistence that the unconditional promise of God's love in Jesus Christ frees us to love and serve our neighbors. This counter-cultural message is as fit for us today as it was for Christians 500 years ago.

On this day, and into God's future, we are called to be a public witness to how God is continually at work, in and through us, re-forming the body of Christ in a world broken by sin. Thanks be to God.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America