



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

What is the Lutheran message? | Reformation Day 2021
ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message
Oct. 29, 2021

This Sunday is Reformation Sunday, and this year it falls on Oct. 31, Reformation Day. It's the 504th anniversary of the Reformation. In 2017, we spent a good deal of time commemorating that event, and we looked forward as well as looking back.

But right now, I want us to pay attention to where we are right now. The Lutheran movement has a distinctive voice and a distinctive way of exposing the gospel that's particularly needed throughout the Christian church, as well as throughout faith communities and in the public square. Unfortunately, I feel that we're slipping—that, in fact, we are being somehow drawn into American civil religion and this notion that somehow, by our own effort and understanding, we can make ourselves better people and make the world a better place.

That's not the Lutheran message. This is God's work and not ours. The world has been saved and redeemed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not our effort but God's. And it's a gift. And, also, we have been set free in Christ now to serve the neighbor.

We're not in this alone. We're not loners. We are part of a greater community. It's time for us to dust off our Small Catechisms — either in book form or an app on your phone — and really take a look at this gem of an exposition of the gospel.

Be well, dear church.