

## **2017 IS A SPECIAL YEAR**

### **The 500th Anniversary of the Beginning of Significant World Changes**

500 years ago this new year, in 1517, an event took place that would put in motion world changes from which we benefit still today and that will be celebrated throughout 2017 on the Northern Neck!

It was October 31, 1517, the day before All Saints Day, also known as All Hallows Eve - now "Halloween" - that an obscure Augustinian monk named Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed 95 Statements to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Most historians look back to this action to mark the date for the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Luther's goal with these theses was to spark a scholarly debate with his Wittenberg University peers on a single theological issue. Little did he realize that this document would flash across the medieval world and spark dynamics that would have drastic effects, not only on all future religious thinking, but also on understanding the concepts of the value of the individual, governmental responsibilities, personal liberty, equality, education, economics and self-determination – to name but a few – that would echo down the centuries.

Dr. Luther was a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg as well as a town pastor. His statements - commonly referred to as "The 95 Theses" - concerned abusive practices of the Christian Church of that day which he wished to debate with his fellow clergymen and professors. Luther's concerns grew out of Scripture and his desire to return the Church's primary focus back to proclaiming Jesus as the Savior and calling people to faith in Him. Eventually, under the banner of "Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone", the flame of reform spread. Within 40 years Evangelicalism, as Lutheranism was first known, was established in nearly half of Europe. In the following centuries Reformation principles would affect every Protestant denomination and have drastic beneficial effects on social and cultural developments that echo still today. In 2017, Lutheran Christians, and many others around the world, will celebrate this historic movement.



The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation will be celebrated during 2017 by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church-LCMS, Callao, VA, with special programs, events and activities. The celebration theme is "It's Still All About Jesus!" The logo shown here will mark anniversary celebration announcements all through the year. The members of Good Shepherd invite the community to join in these events and celebrate our shared, special Reformation heritage. When you hear of these coming events, know that you and your family will be warmly welcomed to be a part of these festivities! Happy 2017!

**Mike Ramming**

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