

# Freed & RENEWED in Christ 500 YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE IN ACTION

## Reformation ABCs

### X is for xenophobia

The topic of xenophobia could not be timelier in the United States as we observe Reformation 500 and, at the same time, struggle as a nation to welcome the “other” with hot button controversies such as border walls, travel bans, white supremacy, and refuges. And while xenophobia is often justified by citing the need for economic and home-land security, neither of those is rooted in who we are called to be as the baptized people of God and proclaimers of the good news of Jesus Christ.

In “On the Freedom of the Christian” Luther further developed the theology of justification by grace by teaching that as fully forgiven children of God, Christians are no longer compelled to keep God's law; however, they freely and willingly serve God and their neighbors. Luther stated, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."

In response to Jesus' call to “love your neighbor as yourself,” Christians are called to find ways to welcome all those who are different than us not because it makes us feel more secure, but because our security comes from God alone. We are called to love as we were first loved by Christ.

Pastor Patrick Downes  
St. Philip's Lutheran, Wilmington, Delaware

### Y is for year, liturgical

The liturgical year (or church year) varies a great deal between the Eastern and Western churches. In the Western church in which the ELCA finds itself, the liturgical year began to have fixed points as early as the 4th century. It continued to evolve and reach somewhat of a standardized form at the turn of the last millennium – but do take note that it continues to evolve even today.

The Liturgical Year begins with four Sundays of Advent, leading to Christmas on December 25. The twelve days of Christmas end with Epiphany. These seasons incorporate many pagan traditions patterned on the solar calendar in the northern hemisphere where Christianity first took root.

The timing of Easter follows the solar and lunar cycles. The date moves because Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. Lent is the forty days before that (excluding Sundays, which are always feast days and therefore not included in the penitential season of Lent), ending with the Great Three Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil). Eastertide is the seven Sundays following Easter. The next Sunday is Pentecost.

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Then we enter the long season of ordinary time, punctuated by the celebrations of Holy Trinity and Christ the King Sundays.

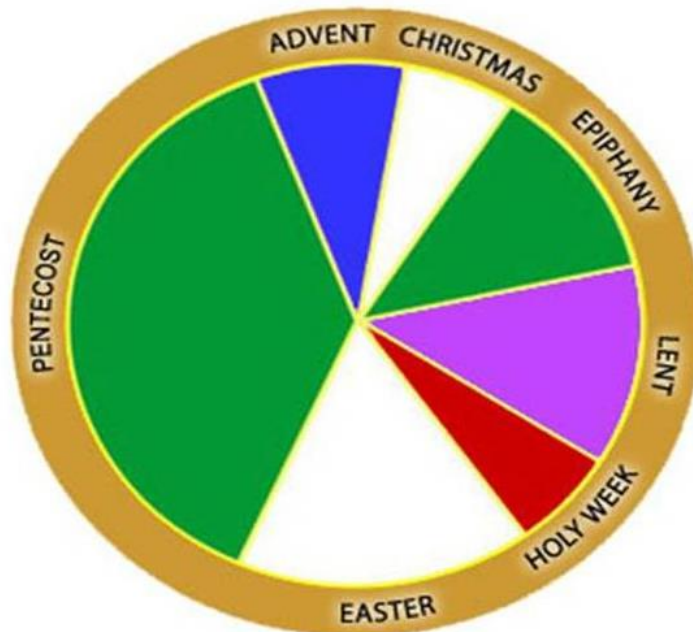
Lutheran contributions to the celebration of the liturgical year include the institution of the Hymn of the Day – something that Luther himself favored a great deal. The Hymn of the Day is carefully selected to relate not only to the lectionary readings but also to the liturgical season.

The liturgical year is also proclaimed by the colors of paraments and vestments. Lutherans in the ELCA use these:

Advent – Blue	Christmas – White	Sundays after Epiphany – Green	Lent – Purple
Maundy Thursday – Scarlet or White	Good Friday – none	Easter Vigil and Easter - White/Gold	
Easter tide – White	Pentecost – Red	Time After Pentecost (Ordinary time) – Green	

Pastor Jason Churchill  
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## The Cycle of the Church Year



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