

# Continue *in* My *Word*

Creations  
Communications

A SERVICE FOR THE **500TH ANNIVERSARY**  
OF THE REFORMATION

LEADER'S GUIDE

# Continue *in* My Word

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## About the Service

This is a special worship service celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with dramas that use quotes from Martin Luther's Table Talk and involve historical people from the time of the Reformation. The service highlights major events and elements of the Reformation in an understandable and informative way. Hymns include "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word," "Dear Christians One And All, Rejoice" and "A Mighty Fortress."

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## Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

### Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special worship service celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with dramas that use quotes from Martin Luther's Table Talk and involve historical people from the time of the Reformation. The service highlights major events and elements of the Reformation in an understandable and informative way and includes the beloved hymns "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word," "Dear Christians One And All, Rejoice" and "A Mighty Fortress."

### Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this special worship service celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with dramas that use quotes from Martin Luther's Table Talk and involve historical people from the time of the Reformation. Let the major events and elements of the Reformation come alive for you this day in an understandable and informative way in this service as we sing, say and hear the Gospel message that we are saved by grace through faith.

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## Order of Service

Introduction

Drama 1:

*Two Christians from Luther's day are on their way to church, discussing the current unrest due to Luther's presenting of his 95 Theses. The date is soon after October 31, 1517.*

**P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**C** **I thank thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, that thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray thee that thou wouldst keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings in life may please thee. For into thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let thy holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Hymn ..... Erhalt Uns, Herr LM

Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word; curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from your Son and bring to nought all he has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are Lord of lords alone;  
Defend your holy Church that we may sing your praise triumphantly.

O Comforter of priceless worth, send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife and lead us out of death to life.

Drama 2:

*Luther, in the monastery, struggles with his faith.*

Old Testament Lesson..... Jeremiah 31:31-34

Drama 3:

*Luther's awareness of the importance of God's Word.*

Second Lesson..... Romans 3:19-28

Drama 4:

*Luther's realization of salvation by faith in Jesus.*

Gospel Lesson ..... John 8:31-36

Drama 5:

*Luther's reliance of God's grace above all else, as he stands before the church authorities at the Diet of Worms and says, "I cannot, and will not, recant."*

A Creedal Hymn ..... Wir Glauben All (metrical) 87 77 77

We all believe in one true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost,  
Ever-present help in need, praised by all the heav'nly host;  
All he made his love enfolds, all creation he upholds.

We all believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Mary's son,  
Who descended from his throne and for us salvation won;  
By whose cross and death are we rescued from all misery.

We all confess the Holy Ghost, who from both in truth proceeds,  
Who sustains and comforts us in all trials, fears and needs.  
Blessed, holy Trinity, praise forever be to thee!

Drama 6:

*The message for today is highlighted by discussions at Luther's dinner table—  
a frequent pastime for many of his friends and students.*

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, with exultation springing,  
And, with united heart and voice and holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God hath done, how his right arm the vict'ry won;  
Right dearly it hath cost him.

Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay, death brooded darkly o'er me,  
Sin was my torment night and day, in sin my mother bore me;  
Yea, deep and deeper still I fell, life had become a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.

My own good works availed me naught, no merit they attaining;  
Free will against God's judgment fought, dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair left naught but death to be my share;  
The pangs of hell I suffered.

But God beheld my wretched state before the world's foundation,  
And, mindful of his mercies great, he planned my soul's salvation.  
A Father's heart he turned to me, sought my redemption fervently:  
He gave his dearest Treasure.

He spoke to his beloved Son: 'tis time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright Jewel of my crown, and bring to man salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set him free, slay bitter death for him that he  
May live with thee forever.

Offering

Prayers

*Each petition ends with the following response:*

**P** O Mighty Fortress, strong Defender,

**C** Give us grace to continue in thy Word.

Lord's Prayer

Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore, remove from us their burden sore,  
As we their trespasses forgive who by offenses us do grieve.  
Thus let us dwell in charity and serve our brother willingly.

Absolution

Hymn of Response ..... Vater Unser 88 88 88

Amen, that is, so shall it be. Confirm our faith and hope in thee  
That we may doubt not, but believe what here we ask we shall receive.  
Thus in thy name and at thy word we say: Amen. Oh, hear us, Lord!

Benediction

Closing Hymn..... Ein Feste Burg (Rhythmic) 87 87 55 56 7

A mighty Fortress is our God, a trusty Shield and Weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need that hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil Foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight; on earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the Valiant One, whom God himself elected.  
Ask ye, who is this? Jesus Christ it is, of Sabaoth Lord,  
And there's none other God; he holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us.  
We tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none,  
He's judged; the deed is done; one little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain with his good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, goods, fame, child and wife, let these all be gone,  
They yet have nothing won; the Kingdom ours remaineth.



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## Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/monument-martin-luther-wittenberg-germany-first-223567285>

- The **Introduction** is spoken by the pastor:

Ⓟ This is a special Reformation Service in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Today, segments of drama will be intertwined with the usual parts of our worship service. Special dramatic scenes, based on Luther's life and portions of this Table Talks, will be presented. I hope that the drama segments will give you a fresh insight into the spiritual miracles God worked through the Reformation and Martin Luther, its leader. May the Lord richly bless this hour of worship, reflection and celebration for you!

- **Drama 1** is performed by 2 readers playing 2 Christians of Luther's day (1 and 2):

*Two Christians from Luther's day are on their way to church, discussing the current unrest due to Luther's presenting of his 95 Theses. The date is soon after October 31, 1517.*

*(Following the Introduction. Two people in period costume enter sanctuary by back center doors. Dialog is spoken while slowly walking up aisle. Eventually both will exit at the front of the church as if they were going into the front doors of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.)*

1: I just don't know! *(Pause)* I'm really concerned! *(Pause)* I'm worried about all the turmoil here in Wittenberg and the unrest all over the countryside since Doctor Luther put up his 95 Theses. He really stirred up a bee hive there! All the trouble! I'm worried about what will happen.

2: Happen? *(Getting excited)* All sorts of things are happening! Good things, too! The City Clerk read the theses to me. Can't say I understood all the arguments, but I do know Doctor Luther really lambasted that Friar Tetzl for selling indulgences. *(Grin of satisfaction)* At first I thought the idea of being able to buy forgiveness sounded good! Really easy, but the more I thought about it . . . I don't know. *(Shaking head)* It just didn't sound right. Any way . . . I know that everyone has taken new notice of the church services and his sermons. Something special is going on every Sunday. I've never heard such wonderful sermons before, either. O, Luther isn't the greatest preacher. Sometimes I just can't follow all the problems, but I've heard more about the Lord Jesus than ever before in my life. And, I like that! *(Walking taller)*

1: Yes, I know what you mean. *(Bright grin turns slowly into frown)* But, what about all the trouble? Where is it going to lead us? I'm afraid nothing good will come of it.

2: You show me a time without trouble! There's always something go on! Some problem, somewhere! I don't know . . . what Pastor Luther is saying and doing may lead to some changes. Heaven knows we need some. But, whatever, I know worship services mean much more to me now than they used to. A lot of my spiritual struggles have been answered! Pastor Luther was telling me of some of his earlier struggles of the heart and soul. What is going on now comes from down deep inside the response to what God is doing. Any way . . . I'm ready to get into church.

1: Me too. It should be almost time for the service to begin.

*(Characters proceed like they are heading to church and walk offstage.)*

• The **Opening Prayer** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

☐ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

☑ **I thank thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, that thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray thee that thou wouldst keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings in life may please thee. For into thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let thy holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

• The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Erhalt Uns, Herr LM:

Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word; curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from your Son and bring to nought all he has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are Lord of lords alone;  
Defend your holy Church that we may sing your praise triumphantly.

O Comforter of priceless worth, send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife and lead us out of death to life.

- **Drama 2** is performed by 1 reader playing Luther (ML):

*Luther, in the monastery, struggles with his faith.*

*(Non-verbal prayer struggles shown. Suddenly hits kneeler, jumps up and shouts.)*

ML: Is there no peace? Why don't you speak to me? Answer me when I pray!

*(Cocks head listening, followed by dejected look)*

ML: All I hear is silence!

*(Kneels again)*

ML: O God, you are the righteous judge who sifts the hearts of men. You pronounce punishment upon sin. You demand that we walk before you and be holy. . . . Show me your way that I might please you! Light my path that I may walk in Your righteousness.

*(Rises slowly and turns with thoughtful expression)*

ML: Ah! Maybe a change will help me. Abbot Staupitz wants me to go back to school and study Holy Scripture. Maybe something can be found there that will point the way to peace.

*(Sigh with shake of head)*

- The **Old Testament Lesson**, Jeremiah 31:31-34, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

- **Drama 3** is performed by 1 reader playing Luther (ML):

*Luther's awareness of the importance of God's Word.*

*(Pacing with mused look, holding a Bible)*

ML: Who to follow? Scholars disagree with each other. The Pope says one thing about pleasing God;

councils in the past have said something else. Where can I find authority for my faith and life? . . . It has to be Scripture! (*Jabbing finger into Bible*)

*(To self but loudly)*

ML: Scripture alone!

- The **Second Lesson**, Romans 3:19-28, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

**P** Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom 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. It 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. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

- **Drama 4** is performed by 1 reader playing Luther:

*Luther's realization of salvation by faith in Jesus.*

*(Luther studying the Bible. Begins talking to himself, but loudly.)*

*(Expression of joy shifts into look of peace)*

ML: That's it! The long sought after peace! The answer to when enough is enough!

*(Reads from the Bible)*

ML: "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from the law" (Romans 3:28). Here is the peace!

*(Falls to knees)*

ML: Lord Jesus Christ, my faith is in you alone!

- The **Gospel Lesson**, John 8:31-36, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

**P** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my

they have in Christ and I'm certain that the Pope is hoping that we have all forgotten!

PM: Yes, I worry about the results of all this upheaval and unrest. Why can't we get things agreed upon, settle down and be about our daily Christian lives and the work of the church?

ML: God knows . . . I never thought of going so far as I did. I intended only to attack indulgences. If anybody had said to me when I was at the Diet of Worms, 'In a few years you'll have a wife and your own household,' I wouldn't have believed it. Yet, it is through the pressures of life and the Lord's guidance down that twisting path that brings about miraculous things within human life. The Order's instructions to me to become a theologian, for example. Little did Abbot Staupitz realize what he was doing when he packed me off to the university to study the Scriptures, become a teacher for the Order and search for spiritual peace at the same time,

SK: How did all those things mix together, Doctor?

ML: Anybody who wishes to be a theologian must have a fair mastery of the Scriptures, so that he may have an explanation for whatever can be alleged against any passage. That is to say, he must distinguish between Law and Gospel. If I were able to do this perfectly I would never again be sad. Whoever apprehends this has won. Whatever is Scripture is either Law or Gospel. One of the two must triumph: the Law leads to despair; the Gospel leads to salvation. I learn more about it every day . . . The Gospel is life . . . The Pope drove me to this; he opened my eyes to it. It is as [St.] Augustine said to himself: the heretics provoke us to search the Scriptures. Otherwise nobody would think about them.

MG: Which of the two, Law or Gospel, is the more necessary? The more important?

ML: There is only one article and one rule of theology, and this is true faith or trust in Christ. Whoever doesn't hold this article and this rule is no theologian. All other articles flow into and out of this one; without it the others are meaningless. The devil has tried from the very beginning to replace this article and to put his own wisdom in its place. However, this article has a good savor for all who are the ones who understand the Gospel.

PG: What of the conflict with Rome? Is there no hope for some kind of eventual resolution – reconciliation?

PM: As much as we would like to see just that, the situation does not look very hopeful at all.

ML: You see, the issue remains that which it has been for the past years. The issue in the controversy over the papacy is that the Pope boasts that he's the head of the church and condemns all who don't live under his power, for he says that although Christ is the (spiritual) head of the church, there must nevertheless also be a bodily head on earth. (I would gladly have conceded this to the Pope if he had only taught the Gospel.) In addition, he claims for himself authority over the church and the Scriptures. No one may expound the Scriptures except the Pope alone, who does it as he pleases. He boasts that he is lord over the church, and the church in turn is mistress over the Scriptures, and so everybody must submit to him. This was intolerable to me and provoked me to write against the papacy. (Even) our opponents still admit today that our teaching's true, but they defend themselves by saying that it is not yet approved by the Pope. Yes, our wiseacres do nothing except to slander and say, "Luther has indeed destroyed the papacy, but he can't build a new church." That is, can't introduce a new form of worship and new ceremonies. These wretched men think that building the church consists of the introduction of some sort of new ceremonies. They don't realize that building up the church means to lead consciences from doubt and murmuring to faith, to knowledge, and to certainty.

PG Doctor, many men think and say that the Law should be emphasized often for the sake of the common people, lest they abuse the Gospel. Others say that the common man ought not to be cited as a reason,

but only the command of Christ, who wishes that the goodness of the Father may become known through the Gospel. Which of these opinions is the better?

ML This shouldn't and can't be comprehended in a fixed rule. Christ himself preached (the Law and the Gospel) according to His circumstances. As a passage or text indicates, therefore, one should take up the Law and the Gospel, for one must have both. It isn't right to draw everything into the Gospel alone; nor is it good always to preach the Law alone. The Scriptures themselves, if properly adhered to, will give the answer.

PM (*To Pastor Graumann*) But the differences between the two must be maintained at all times otherwise faith, life and salvation are placed in jeopardy.

ML Correct! (*Getting excited*) It's the supreme art of the devil that he can make the Law out of the Gospel. If I can hold on to the distinction between Law and Gospel . . . (namely that the Law shows me my sins and my shortcomings; the Gospel shows me my Savior) . . . I can say to (the Devil) any and every time, that he should (leave me alone). Even if I sinned I would say, 'Should I deny the Gospel on this account?' It hasn't come to that yet. Once I debate (with the Devil) about what I have done and left undone, (however), I am finished. But if I reply to the Devil on the basis of the Gospel, 'The forgiveness of sins covers all,' I have won. On the other hand, if the devil gets me involved in what I have done and left undone, he has won. So don't be too daring. The distinction between Law and Gospel will do it. The Devil turns the Word upside down. If one sticks to the Law, one is lost. A good conscience won't set one free, but the distinction (between Law and Gospel) will. So you should say, "The Word is twofold, on the one hand terrifying and on the other hand comforting." Here Satan objects, 'But God says you are damned because you don't keep the Law.' I respond, 'God also says that I shall live.' His mercy is greater than sin, and life is stronger than death. Hence if I have left this or that undone, our Lord God will tread it under foot with His grace. But who can get so far in the present temptation? It was a bitter experience even for Christ himself (and it would be for us), except that He has promised that He won't let us be tempted beyond our strength.

KL I can understand that when you talk about it, and even when your Assistant Pastor Polner preaches. But, I really have trouble understanding Pastor Pomeranus because he always seems to wander so far from his subject!

ML (*Chuckles*) Pomeranus preached the way you women usually talk . . . (too often he) thinks he should say everything that occurs to him. A preacher should see to it that he sticks to the subject and performs his task in such a way that people understand what he says. Preachers who try to say everything that occurs to them remind me of the maidservant who is on the way to market. When he meets another maid she stops to chat with her for a while. Then she meets another maid and talks with her. She does the same with the third and fourth and so gets to market very slowly. This is what preachers do who wander too far from their subject. They try to say everything all at once, but it won't do.

KL (*Laughs*) So true. However, in marriage one had best try to say it all. Not necessarily all at once, but it is important that it all be said!

ML (*With contented sigh*) Ah, my Katie, I wouldn't give you up for all of France—and Venice too! True love is amazing: The first love is ardent, an intoxicated love which dazzles us and leads us on. But remember, there's more to it than a union of the flesh. There must be harmony in patterns of life and ways of thinking. The bonds of matrimony alone won't do. And besides, when one looks back upon it, marriage isn't so bad as when one looks forward to it. We see that our mothers and fathers were saints and that we have the divine commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." (*Turning quickly to the children, asks suddenly*) Where is that found, children?

C1, C2: Exodus 20, verse 12!

ML: Very good, children! You were paying attention while we were studying the Catechism. . . .” When I look beside myself, I see my brothers and sisters and friends. I find that there’s nothing but godliness in marriage. To be sure, when I look at marriage first, only the flesh seems to be there. The longing of a man for a woman is God’s creation. . . .

SK (*Looks up from writing*) Why do all these good and beautiful things have to be placed in the middle of such a sinful and ungodly world?

ML: Kurt, God placed his church in the midst of the world, among countless external activities and callings, not in order that Christians should become monks, but so that they may live in fellowship and that our works and the exercises of our faith may become known among men . . . But, enough talk for the moment. Katie, if you’ll had me the guitar, maybe we can sing “Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice.” This was the second hymn I wrote. It is meant to depict the struggles and victories of every believer.

- A **Hymn of Justification** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Freut Euch 87 87 887:

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, with exultation springing,  
And, with united heart and voice and holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God hath done, how his right arm the vict’ry won;  
Right dearly it hath cost him.

Fast bound in Satan’s chains I lay, death brooded darkly o’er me,  
Sin was my torment night and day, in sin my mother bore me;  
Yea, deep and deeper still I fell, life had become a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.

My own good works availed me naught, no merit they attaining;  
Free will against God’s judgment fought, dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair left naught but death to be my share;  
The pangs of hell I suffered.

But God beheld my wretched state before the world’s foundation,  
And, mindful of his mercies great, he planned my soul’s salvation.  
A Father’s heart he turned to me, sought my redemption fervently:  
He gave his dearest Treasure.

He spoke to his beloved Son: “Tis time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright Jewel of my crown, and bring to man salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set him free, slay bitter death for him that he  
May live with thee forever.”

- The **Offering** is collected at this time.