

Why we should celebrate Reformation Sunday

By [Scott Alan Johnson](#)

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It's Reformation Sunday this week in Protestant circles, which for us Lutherans means we're into the season of questioning the benefit of the thing. One particularly well-stated article was [posted by Clint Schnekloth](#) at [LivingLutheran.com](#):

As it stands, Reformation Sunday is the only Sunday of the entire church year that commemorates a moment in the history of Christianity rather than a moment in the narrative of Scripture itself. It is elevated and idealized precisely because it is so unique. This needs to stop.

Clint is absolutely right. Reformation Sunday shouldn't be a celebration of one moment in the history of Christianity. But I would argue that we should change how we celebrate Reformation Sunday rather than bury it, as Clint has recommended.

Why? Because it's not *THE* Reformation Sunday. True, we've set our liturgical calendar to commemorate the date on which Brother Martin posted his 95 theses for public consideration (a mythology I'll address on Sunday in my sermon). However, one could (and I believe should) point out that there have been moments like this throughout the church's history, all of which are worthy of being called reformation moments, moments where the church has been re-oriented toward the gospel, moved away from the many, many roads down which our distracted, narcissistic minds can take us.

It's been well documented that Luther was horrified when he heard people referring to themselves as "Lutherans." "I ask that my name be left silent and people not call themselves Lutheran, but rather

Christians. Who is Luther? The doctrine is not mine. I have been crucified for no one," said the good Doctor. [Citation](#)

You could take this argument and add it to the list of reasons to bury Reformation Sunday. But to do so would also be to hide the reasons FOR celebration: those times when the Spirit has led the church kicking and screaming into a new reality. It's possible we are experiencing such a time right now, and if so, we should give thanks and celebrate that the Spirit continues to work in such fractured vessels as our beloved church.

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