



**Upstate New York Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**



**Issue Date:** April 20, 2017

**Media Contact:**  
**Bernard Grizard**  
**585-328-3210 | grizard@dor.org**

## **Lutherans and Catholics in Rochester to dialogue, worship together in 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the Reformation**

Rochester, N.Y. – In hopes of contributing to a long-term relationship of cooperation, mutual respect and understanding, local Roman Catholics and Lutherans will engage in a series of dialogues over the next several months, culminating in an ecumenical service celebrated by the local bishops of both Christian denominations.

Noting the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in this year 2017 of Martin Luther’s public posting of his “95 Theses,” resulting in the Protestant Reformation, we seek the opportunity to unite in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and hearts that, in the words of Jesus, “all may be one.” (John 17:21) After centuries of division, the Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s opened the way for efforts at reconciliation. On both an international level and on a national level in the United States, Lutherans and Catholics have been involved in more than 50 years of dialogue aimed at finding common ground in such areas as interpretation of scripture, the sacraments and doctrine.

The series of dialogues, based on the document, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, will aim at deepening friendships and spiritual interactions between local Catholics and Lutherans. Also discussed will be joint service projects to benefit the community at both the diocesan level and between specific local churches to enhance and respect God’s gift of life.

The dialogues will involve clergy and lay faithful in both Lutheran and Catholic settings. These will be led by the Reverend Daniel Hoffman, a Lutheran pastor, and the Reverend Scott B. Caton, a Catholic priest.

On Sunday, October 29, 2017, a joint, public worship service will be held at 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester. Presiding will be Bishop of Rochester Salvatore R. Matano and Bishop John Stanley Macholz of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, along with clergy of both denominations. All are welcome.

*Those interested in learning more about the program may call 585-328-3228, x 1287.*

**“We Catholics and Lutherans understand our work together toward reconciliation is for the sake of the healing of the whole body of Christ into which all of us are incorporated through baptism.”**

*~ From the March 2, 2017, joint statement by the Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Conference of Bishops.*