

## The Reverend Marjo Anderson

**C: Reformation Sunday  
Thematic on Martin Luther**

**30 October 2022  
Salem, Bridgeport**

### **“When the Protestant Reformation Really Began”**

Most people trace the beginning of the Protestant Reformation to the moment when Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, but unless those 95 resolutions flew into his mind that morning, that was NOT the beginning of the Reformation.

Today I'd like us to look at what I call the seminal event that started the Reformation – seminal, as the moment in which a seed is planted.

The process begins before that, of course, when the ground is prepared, so we're going to go back a bit before that seminal moment in Luther's life when God was preparing to plant a special seed.

Law school & Thunderstorm

Panic, Prayer, and Promise

Perception of God and Consequence of Promise - MONK

Anxiety & Fear, Shame & Guilt

Positive work - Worship, Prayer, Bible Study, Service

Positive / Negative work - Confession

Negative work – Punishment and Pain

SEMINAL MOMENT –

CHANGED HIS HEART AND MIND AND ENTIRE LIFE

1. THERE WAS A BURNING NEED IN HIS HEART TO SHARE–

Teaching, Preaching

Need for reform in the Church – 95 Theses, Writing

Resistance

2. HIS FAITH WAS SO STRONG

THAT HE KEPT SHARING NO MATTER THE COST

Consequences

The White Mainline Church is in dire need of reform.  
Reform doesn't start with discussing new theses/ideas  
in congregations/synods/denominations

I believe that God is, right now,  
preparing the ground within the hearts of people in the church.

Then when the time is right,  
those who are ready will have an encounter with the living God,  
and that experience will transform their minds and hearts and lives  
so that they will be totally new people from the inside out.

You will know that they have been changed because 2 things will be different:

1. They will have a burning need in their hearts  
to share their experience & their joy
2. Their faith will drive them to share, no matter what the risk or cost.

The Church is not really dying – it's just winter – and I believe spring is coming.  
God is preparing hearts and minds to be transformed.  
And when the seed of the Holy Spirit is planted, people's faith will begin to grow,  
and then it will bloom and blossom and eventually bear fruit.

I know that God has God's own time schedule for things,  
and it would be foolish to run ahead of where God is leading.

At the same time, it's vital that we do all that we can  
to be prepared to follow where God leads.

And so, on the Reformation Sunday, I ask you to pray with me.

In fact, I ask you to repeat this prayer after me.

God of boundless power and endless love,  
open my heart and mind, my body and soul.

Pour your Holy Spirit into me  
that I may experience your living presence.

I give you all that I am,  
and ask you to make me into what you desire.

Set my heart on fire  
to share this experience with others.

Grow my faith  
so I am willing to risk all to follow you.

I pray this, trusting that you will answer my prayer.

In the name of Jesus I pray,

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Amen