

# WordbyWord



Library Newsletter / July 2016

OCTOBER 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day That Changed the World

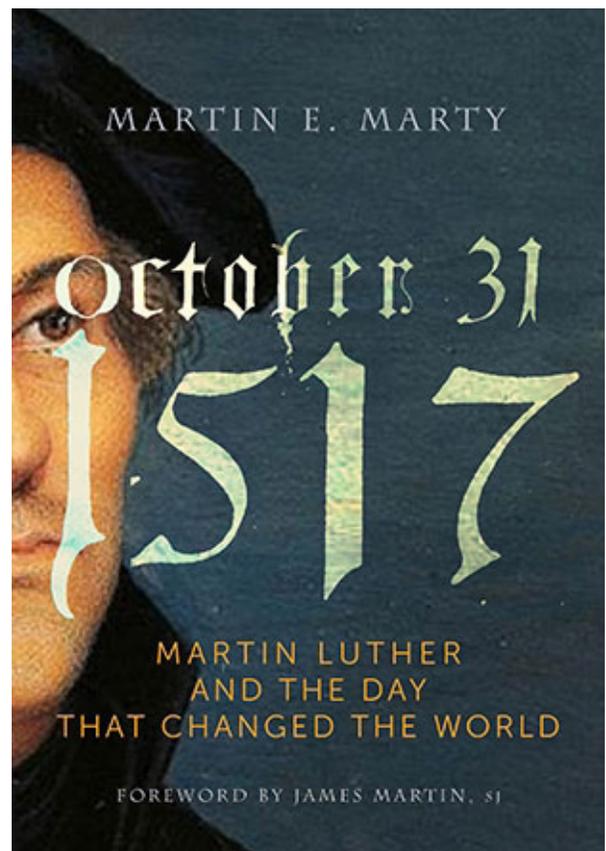
Yes, this is the title of a new addition to the Incarnation library - and the date has nothing to do with Halloween, the event we Minnesotans often associate with October 31st. This is a book with a challenging subtitle: "Martin Luther and the Day That Changed the World." The author is none other than Martin E. Marty, Lutheran pastor, historian, and professor at the University of Chicago.

This is not large in pages (only 114) but truly large in scope. Marty says the book is about one thing only and based on Martin Luther's first of his famous 95 Theses. That says: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said "Repent," he intended the entire life of believers to be repentance." This book is about repentance and is meant to keep that before us, especially as we Lutherans commemorate the 500th anniversary of those events which continue to shape our lives today.

Marty writes much about how repentance calls for dialogue and reminds us that dialogue focuses on repentance. He speaks of ecumenical work as it requires repentance, about diversity, and about the sacraments and practices among "repentant Christians". Readers, Lutherans, Catholics and other Christians alike, will find much to consider and will be inspired to both celebrate and be challenged to continue in those dialogs of repentance. (It was especially meaningful reading for me because I was a voting member at the ELCA Assembly in 1999 which affirmed The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification with the Roman Catholic Church. It was the highlight of the Assembly for me and something that I have and will always remember. It

seemed to me to signify a healing in the Christian family that deserved more publicity than it received, either then or now.)

If you have long ago read Luther's 95 these or if you have never read them but only heard about them or perhaps not known of them at all - Marty kindly includes them in this small volume. Reading this now in the latter half of 2016 would be an excellent way to begin to think about the events of commemoration before us in 2017. Christians around the world will be joining in commemoration and you will want to join them.



*Circle of Grace* by Jan Richardson is subtitled "A Book of Blessings for the Seasons" but she is writing in terms of the seasons of the church year, not those of the year of nature. And yet some of her words do speak to our natural year, too. For instance, she begins her section on Advent and Christmas with the heading "Where the Light Begins" and we naturally remember that the winter solstice occurs during the Advent season. We can recall that our ancestors, especially in northern Europe, celebrated the "return of the sun" in the midst of the long dark days. We in Minnesota who experience a difference in daylight hours of about nine hours from winter to summer can understand!

Richardson is skilled in her use of words - Epiphany has a section titled "For Those Who Have Far to Travel" and we remember the men from the East on their search. "Beloved is Where We Begin" is her heading for Lent and speaks to Jesus' understanding of his role and of God's never ending love for the world God created and sustains. Ascension and Pentecost are titled "When We Breathe Together" and we are reminded of the wind, the breath of God on that first Pentecost day.

Richardson is an ordained United Methodist pastor, a writer and an artist. She lives in Florida.

*Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman is another small but mighty book. It was introduced to Incarnation's Hunger Action Group by the members of Galilee Lutheran Church, Roseville, who have this year established a 320-plot community garden on Rice Street. They told us that reading this short novel about the way in which a community garden came into being in Cleveland is much like the story of the garden they are shepherding. Each of the chapters is told from the point of view of the diverse people in the community - diverse in race and ethnicity, in age, in ability or disability, in life experience. The garden "happens" but the stories of the individuals, though somehow intertwined, don't end and one is left wondering what happened to Kim or Nora or Curtis.

There is a delightful end piece telling us about how Fleischman came to write the story. His explanation of the term "seedfolks" as an old term for ancestors makes the title even more appropriate. One can only hope the garden continues to grow and thrive for the generations in the future.

*The Light Between Oceans* is the debut novel of M.L. Stedman. It was one of the titles read and discussed by the women who participate in Women Read, Incarnation's women's book group. (We meet monthly from September-May on the third Wednesday at 1 p.m. Other readers welcome.) It was a book that brought much lively discussion and plenty of disagreement about whether we liked it or didn't enjoy it!

A lighthouse is a symbolic setting for an intricate story. Lighthouses can be thought of as sanctuaries, as solitary outposts, and as ways of marking time as the light faithfully rotates. In this story, set on the rocky island of Janus off the coast of Australia, there is tension between right and wrong between good and evil, and all manner of morality. Stedman asks "Is there error in an action motivated by best intention? Can a right make good a wrong? Is there wrong in a greater good?"

Tom has chosen to become the lighthouse keeper in part to keep from remembering the horror of service in WWI. His wife finds isolation hard and her inability to carry a child to term causes her even more turmoil. When a dinghy is washed ashore with an unidentified dead man and a live baby girl, the story turns. They decide to keep the child, pretending it is their biological child, until this is no longer possible. Readers will find characters with whom they can sympathize - and others whose actions they can less easily justify. Read it yourself - and likely find yourself haunted by the choices.

*Lulla-Bible* by Stephen Elkins has two subtitles. The first is "lullabies & verses" while the other is "A Musical Treasury for Mother and Baby". Together the two tell you much about the book but they don't give you the hint about the delightful and gentle illustrations that go along with the music and the verses. Some of the lullabies are very familiar ones, perhaps even ones that were sung to you as a child or ones that you share with your own children. (Think "Jacob's Ladder" and "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam"). But there are many new and delightful songs to learn and share. (Like "The Lion Lays Down with the Lamb" and "The Light of the World"). The melody line is printed for each of the 50+ lullabies in the collection. This donation was truly a gift to the library collection at Incarnation.

*Open Secrets* by Richard Lischer is another book with a subtitle; this time it is "A Spiritual Journey Through a Country Church". While I think that reflects somewhat the book, I think there is far more because this is the story of a newly-minted pastor with a Ph.D. in theology who is called to a small conservative church in an economically depressed town in southern Illinois. If you are thinking things are going to go swimmingly well for both the congregation AND the new pastor, you are very wrong. But there are many grace-filled moments and both the pastor and congregation are stretched and grow in their faith and in their shared love for each other. This personal story is no doubt the story of many churches and their clergy. Read it and see if it sounds familiar to you . . .

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# Library Hours

The Library is open whenever the Incarnation building is open.

## Check-out procedures:

- 1) Fill out the card in book/media pocket with your full name, phone number and the date you take out the materials.
- 2) Leave card(s) in the basket. PLEASE DO NOT FILE CARDS!
- 3) Return books after three weeks and Videos/DVDs/CDs after one week. Place returned items in the large basket on the floor.