



# *DER BOTSCHAFTER*

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## Luther's Rose

### History of Lutheranism

**Lutheranism** as a religious movement originated in the Holy Roman Empire during the early 16th century as an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church. **Martin Luther**, a professor of Bible at the young University of Wittenberg, originated the movement with a call for a public debate regarding several issues within the Catholic Church. **Lutheranism** soon became a wider religious and political movement within the Holy Roman Empire owing to support from key electors and the widespread adoption of the printing press. This movement soon spread throughout northern Europe and became the driving force behind the wider **Protestant Reformation**. Today, **Lutheranism** has spread from Europe to all six populated continents.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century many changes occurred in the European society, each of which can be attributed as contributing to the academic and political climate permitting the spread of the Lutheran movement. Many earlier religious movements had promoted ideas that **Luther** came to adopt, including the **Hussites**, **Waldensians**, and followers of **Girolamo Savonarola**. Importantly, the conditions created by the Renaissance allowed thinkers such as **Desiderius Erasmus** to question the role and nature of the Church itself.

By the beginning of the 16th century, the European continent had seen vast changes in the culture of the past 200 years. The dramatic loss of population due to the [Black Plague](#) had created new economic opportunities and mobility among the lower classes of society. New technologies came about to address labor shortages and the need to increase productivity, which in turn created new classes of society to support

manufacture and trade. Hans Luther, the father of Martin Luther, was a member of this new middle class, making a living leasing and operating copper mines and smelters. The Luther family enjoyed enough income and social status that it was possible for Hans to envision Luther having a university education with a career as a lawyer.

During the 14th century, the Roman Catholic Church was also racked by upheavals produced by the resolution of the Western Schism in the early part of the century, the controversies surrounding the papacies of the Renaissance era and new pressures brought by the invasions of Christendom by the burgeoning Ottoman Empire.

The spread of books and higher education had an obvious impact on the Lutheran reformers. The Gutenberg Bible was first printed in 1455, with subsequent editions of the Bible and other books quickly becoming available in wider distribution than ever before. Along with the spread of the book, universities were becoming the centers of a new academic culture that existed outside of the immediate control of the Roman Catholic Church. Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, founded the University of Wittenberg in 1502, a university that would house **Martin Luther**, a young Augustinian monk, as a Professor of Bible.

On 31st October, 1517, **Luther** wrote to Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg, protesting the sale of indulgences. He enclosed a copy of his **Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences**, a document which came to be known as the **Ninety-five Theses**. Luther had no intention of confronting the church, but saw his disputation as a scholarly objection to church practices. Nevertheless, there was an undercurrent of challenge in several of the theses, specifically in Thesis 86, which asks: *Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money.*

That same day Luther nailed a copy of the **Ninety-five Theses** to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg —church doors acting as the bulletin boards of his time—an event seen today as sparking the Protestant Reformation, celebrated annually as Reformation Day on 31 October. The **Ninety-five Theses** were quickly translated from Latin into German, printed, and widely copied, making this controversy one of the first in historical events to be aided by the printing press. Within two weeks, the theses had spread throughout Germany; within two months throughout Europe. In June 1520, the Pope warned Luther that he risked ex-communication unless he recanted sections from his writings within 60 days, including the **Ninety-five Theses**. A papal nuncio attempted to

brokered a solution, but Luther, who had sent the Pope a copy of ***On the Freedom of a Christian*** publicly set fire to the papal decree at Wittenberg on 10 December 1520, an act he defended. Consequently, Pope Leo X ex-communicated **Luther** on 3rd January 1521, with the [\*Decet Romanum Pontificem\*](#) decree.

Private conferences were held to determine Luther's fate. On May 25, 1521, the Emperor presented the [Edict of Worms](#), declaring Luther an outlaw, banning his literature, and requiring his arrest. It was a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter, permitting anyone to kill him without legal consequence.

Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, had Luther discreetly intercepted on his way home from Worms by masked horsemen and escorted to the security of the Castle in Eisenach, where Luther grew a beard and lived incognito for nearly eleven months, pretending to be a knight.

During his stay at Wartburg **Luther** translated the [New Testament](#) from Greek into German. An original first edition of the translation is under the case on the desk which can be seen upon visiting the castle.



Door of castle where 95 Theses Nailed.



Desk where Luther translated New Testament from Greek to German with original first translation.

## **UGASF CLUB MARCH EVENTS IN FLORIDA**

**CAPE CORAL...No information**

**CENTRAL FLORIDA...**

**April 9 – Schlagerabend - Eva Adams**

**April 23 – Springoberfest – Dan Witucki**

**HOLLYWOOD...April 9 – Halfway to Oktoberfest – Bob Houston plus the Schuhplattler Auerhahn group.**

**MARION COUNTY – April 24 - Spring Dance @ Marion Oaks Community Center at noon**

**ORLANDO ALPENROSE SCHUHPLATTLER – No Event**

**PALM BEACH...April 8 – Half-way to Oktoberfest and 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of American German Club – Bob Houston**

**April 24 – Frühschoppen – all items a la carte**

**April 30 – A night at the Copacabana – 13 member Latin band with exotic show dancers, singers and artists, as well as Caribbean Meal.**



**PINELLAS PARK...April 2 – April**

**Fools Dance – with Eva Adams**

**April 9 – Canadian Night - Matthias**

**April 16 – Easter Parade – Eva Adams**

**April 23 – Heimat Abend–Sepp&Heinz**

**April 30 –For Good Times - Matthias**

**May 1 – Maifest in Biergarten**

**ALL CLUBS & MEMBERS INVITED**



**SARASOTA...Apr 30 May Dance with Peter & Edith**

**SUN CITY CENTER...No event**

**TAMPA CULTURAL CENTER...**

**No information**

**THE VILLAGES...No Event**

**TREASURE COAST...April 24 – 1 pm Spring Dance – Ron Finn**

**VENICE...April 16 - UNTIL We Meet Again – Sepp Diepolder**

**WEST CENTRAL FL...no event**

