

# Five Years as a Rainbow Church

A Celebration of Inclusive, Affirming, and Reforming Ministry at  
Lutheran Church of the Cross

Sunday October 1, 2017

Worship at 10 am

Coffee, Conversation, and Celebration following worship

## ***A Reflection on Rainbows, churches, & Reformation***

*Have you ever been in the fellowship hall of Living Spirit United Church? The people there have dedicated a full wall, floor-to-ceiling to making their ministry transparent. They have painted panels in all the colors of the rainbow, with descriptions, pictures, and budget numbers of every ministry in which they are engaged. Across the top read's their charge: "Bridging the Gaps." They, like we, are an open, affirming, and welcoming congregation. The evidence of it is splashed on their walls!*

*Of course, we see the rainbow splashed everywhere these days, and equate it with the LGBT+ community, but did you know the rainbow flag originated with the Protestant Reformation?*

***That's right, WE started it! The rainbow flag was the symbol of the Peasants' Revolt during the Protestant Reformation as a symbol of new hope, a new era, and social change.*** (Technically, Luther distanced himself from that movement, but still....!) *The rainbow flag has been used broadly as the symbol of peace movements since that time and was even used to identify neutral ships during the American Revolutionary War.*

*Of course, people in the intervening time have long forgotten the biblical meaning behind the rainbow, but we ought remember well. It comes to us from Genesis 7-9: The rainbow is God's retired weapon, a reminder that God has vowed to never again flood the earth.*

*The rainbow is a symbol of peace and welcome. Wherever we find it, it is a symbol of sanctuary. The presence of the rainbow reminds us that we are called to follow this God and to put down our weapons, too. We are called to follow the nonviolent Jesus, who took up God's covenant of peace, and calls us to do the same.*

*At Church of the Cross, we practice welcome, inclusion, and interest in all people. That means we often have to confront our own values, morals, prejudices, and opinions. We lay down the ones that threaten others as we build the muscles of social justice, diversity, and community. The rainbow is not a magnet to attract any particular people; it is a sign for all people: Everyone is welcome here. Here, you are safe. Here we are working on being good allies for all sorts of people who face oppression or persecution.*

*As we celebrate our heritage, we remain mindful of those who need us to be continually reforming and continually at work to make welcome, inclusion, and affirmation our way of life. Remember: Jesus died because he was too inclusive. He is risen, and we with him!*

Pastor Laura Holck