

The Archbishop of Canterbury is to mark an act of reconciliation between the Catholic and Protestant churches on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

During a service at Westminster Abbey on 31 October, the Archbishop will present copies of a text supporting an agreement resolving the theological dispute behind the Reformation to the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation;

The text is a formal resolution approved by representatives from the Anglican Communion, who have welcomed the substance of the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, signed by the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council and World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The profound difference in opinion on the understanding of justification - how humankind can be reconciled to God in Jesus Christ - was the fundamental issue which divided the Church in the West during the Reformation.

The Bishop of Coventry, the Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth, said: "The Joint Declaration was a historic breakthrough in overcoming the divisions that emerged from the Reformation through a fresh statement of its key concern, how sinners can be put right with God and empowered to live in a new way. The good news of forgiveness and freedom through Jesus Christ is what unites us as Christians. It's the word of grace and hope that - together - we want to share with all the world."

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, Director of Unity, Faith and Order for the Anglican Communion, said: "In our separate bilateral dialogues with both the Catholic Church and the communion of churches in the Lutheran World Federation, Anglicans have explored the questions of justification, and are agreed on the essential aspects of our salvation in Christ. During the historic 2017 anniversary, Anglicans rejoice in the extraordinary achievement that the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification represents as a sign of healing after 500 years of division."

The resolution passed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 'welcomes and affirms the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.' The resolution was noted in a motion approved by the General Synod of the Church of England earlier this year on the Reformation Anniversary, as it welcomed 'signs of convergence between the churches on the doctrine of salvation'.

The service at Westminster Abbey marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in Europe, dated from Martin Luther publishing 95 theses protesting against the practice of indulgences, on 31 October 1517 in Wittenberg. Held in partnership with the [Council of Lutheran Churches](#), it will be led by the Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, with the address given by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

# Notes to editors

- [Further information on the service at Westminster Abbey](#)
- [Full text of the ACC resolution](#)
- [Full text of the JDDD](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/archbishop-mark-agreement-catholic-and-lutheran-churches-500th-anniversary>