

The ELCA Wittenberg Center presents  
a 2025 Webinar Series :

# BLESSED TO BE: EXPLORING GENDER, COMPANIONSHIP, AND SEXUALITY

*Celebrating the Luthers' 500th Wedding Anniversary*

## Topics :

- 📅 9/30 Blessed to Be Bold: The Reformation, Power, and Women
- 📅 10/1 Blessed to Break the Mold: Marriage, Tradition, and Divine Disruption
- 📅 10/2 Blessed to Delight: Sexuality, Faith, and God's Good Creation
- 🕒 12-1 p.m. Central time for each of the three dates above
- 📍 Online via Zoom
- 🔊 English with live Spanish translations

## Speakers :

speaking on 9/30



**Dr. Mary Streufert**

ELCA Director for Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment

speaking on 10/1



**Rev. Dr. Themba Lancelot Mkhabela**

ELCA Regional Representative, Southern Africa

speaking on 10/1



**Rev. Dr. Kathryn "Kit" Kleinhans**

Dean Emerita, Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio

speaking on 10/2



**Rev. Dr. Elaine Neuenfeldt**

Global Gender Justice Program Manager at ACT Alliance

speaking on 10/2



**Dr. Elyssa Salinas-Lazarski**

Adjunct Faculty in Theology and Honors at Dominican University

This webinar series is free  
and open to all.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Wittenberg Center

**Register now at :**

[www.tinyurl.com/LutherWedding500](http://www.tinyurl.com/LutherWedding500)

*For more information about the ELCA Wittenberg Center, go to [www.elca.org/wittenberg](http://www.elca.org/wittenberg)*

## Part 1

### Blessed to Be: Exploring Gender, Companionship, and Sexuality

*Celebrating the Luthers' 500<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*

# BLESSED TO BE BOLD: THE REFORMATION, POWER, AND WOMEN

#### Speaker



**Dr. Mary Streufert**

ELCA Director for Gender  
Justice and Women's  
Empowerment

#### Theme

In 1525 Martin Luther and Katie von Bora married. Why does it matter that a former monk married a former nun? They married because of massive theological shifts in the Protestant Reformation. This first of three sessions sets the stage for reflections on gender, companionship, and sexuality through ongoing faith reformation.

Dr. Mary Streufert (she/her) will recount the tale of their marriage and connect it to Luther's reforming theological anthropology. She will unpack research on Luther's views of females and mark the contrast with medieval perspectives. Participants will consider the significance of theological reformation for contemporary Christian understandings of power and gender.



Sept. 30, 2025



From 12-1 PM  
Central time

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## Part 2

### Blessed to Be: Exploring Gender, Companionship, and Sexuality

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# BLESSED TO BREAK THE MOLD: MARRIAGE, TRADITION, AND DIVINE DISRUPTION

#### Speakers



**Rev. Dr. Kit Kleinhans**

Dean Emerita, Trinity Lutheran  
Seminary in Columbus, Ohio



**Rev. Dr. Themba  
Lancelot Mkhabela**

ELCA Regional Representative,  
Southern Africa

#### Theme

Even before his own marriage in 1525, Martin Luther used marriage as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the believer. The Rev. Dr. Kit Kleinhans (she/her) will reflect on the question: How can Luther's theology of marriage and his experience of marriage be a resource for our theology and practice of marriage today?

The Rev. Dr. Themba Mkhabela (he/him) will examine marriage in South Africa through Christian and cultural lenses, using Luther's marriage as a lens for reform. He will explore global trends, advocating for dialogue, communal understanding, and love and care for the neighbor to harmonize faith practices, culture, and modern realities locally and globally.



**Oct. 1, 2025**



**From 12-1 PM  
Central time**

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## Part 3

### Blessed to Be: Exploring Gender, Companionship, and Sexuality

*Celebrating the Luthers' 500<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*

# BLESSED TO DELIGHT: SEXUALITY, FAITH, AND GOD'S GOOD CREATION

#### Speakers



**Rev. Dr. Elaine  
Neuenfeldt**

Global Gender Justice Program  
Manager at ACT Alliance



**Dr. Elyssa Salinas-  
Lazarski**

Adjunct Faculty in Theology and  
Honors at Dominican University

#### Theme

Sexuality, pleasure, and bodily autonomy are sacred gifts from God. Rooted in Lutheran theology, the Rev. Dr. Elaine Neuenfeldt (she/her) will talk about the body as a site of divine encounter and human dignity, which calls for ethical responsibility, honoring consent, and the agency to make decisions about one's body. Faith communities are invited to embrace love in all its diversity, resist shame, and foster justice, freedom, and joy as holy expressions of grace.

Dr. Salinas-Lazarski (she/her) will be discussing Martin Luther's redefinition of chastity through his work "On Monastic Vows" and reflection on his life. In analyzing these particular pieces of Luther's works and life, his theology allows for the affirmation of sexuality and interrogation of chastity in conversation with conscience.



**Oct. 2, 2025**



**From 12-1 PM  
Central time**

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