

October 19, 2025

Laity Sunday

Laity Sunday. You may have never heard of it. It began in the 1920’s among Methodist churches to emphasize that ALL Christians are called to ministry and not just ordained clergy. This is even more important in era of the ‘tyranny of professionalization’ and a time of ‘hiring’ clergy to do the work of the church. Both are counter to the gospel.

Luke tells the story of a widow in Luke 18 who refuses to give up her plea for justice, hounding a judge who neither fears God nor respects people. Her persistence is exhausting but, in the end, she prevails.

Jesus tells this story so his followers “might always pray and not lose heart.” But notice who embodies that lesson—not a rabbi, not a priest, not a prophet, but an ordinary woman with no social standing, no credentials, no power except her determination. She is the church’s first lay leader, if you will, showing us what it looks like to persist in faith when the odds are against us.

Laity Sunday matters because the church would wither without the widows and carpenters, the teachers and nurses, the accountants and retirees who keep showing up. It is their prayers, their steady presence, their insistence on God’s justice that carry the gospel into places pastors will never reach. Clergy may preach about persistence on Sunday morning, but it is the laity who practice it Monday through Saturday—visiting neighbors, teaching children, feeding the hungry, tending the sick, writing letters to those in power.

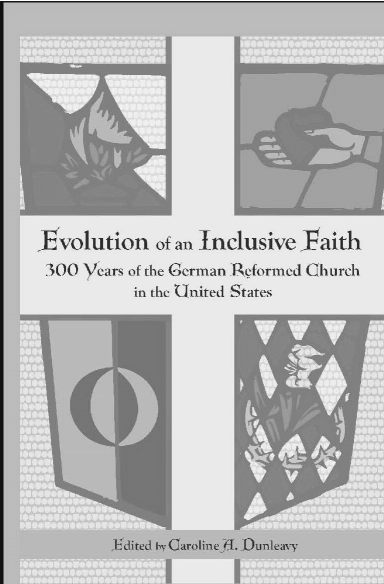
The widow’s voice is still ringing in the ears of an unjust judge. And the voices of ALL God’s people are still ringing in the world—small, persistent, faithful.

- Rev. Bill Worley, PSE Conference Minister

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Evolution of an Inclusive Faith

300 Years of the German Reformed Church in the United States



Evolution of an Inclusive Faith
300 Years of the German Reformed Church
in the United States

Edited by Caroline A. Dunleavy

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.”
Hebrews 11:1-3 NRSV

From the Introduction: It is said that light may be described alternatively as a particle or a wave. The same may be said in some ways of history. It may be described as a series of “particles,” or events that give shape and form to our understanding of things in earlier days. It may also be understood as “waves” of broader movements that both absorb and make diffuse particular events from times past. In one sense, the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the historic Communion service on October 15, 1725 at Falkner Swamp is a truly important event that the United Church of Christ, especially in Pennsylvania, ought to celebrate and commemorate. In another sense, the event is a representation of the particle theory of history that should not be emphasized to exclusion of the wave theory, which tells the tale of broader movements in Reformed Christianity, European colonization, and the conditions of life in North America prior to the establishment of the United States.

Praise for *Evolution of an Inclusive Faith*

Each chapter reminds us that, even as we're one in Christ, each individual and community is made up of various stories, and each story that we create and tell is important to the greater whole.

Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Drummond, Founding Dean, Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School

Reformed and reforming, united and uniting. These themes knit together the history and continuing influence of the German Reformed Church in this collection of essays celebrating its 300th anniversary of ministry in the United States.

Rev. Richard R. Berg, Director of Library Services (Retired), Lancaster Theological Seminary

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Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel, Pastor Emerita, Evangelical Reformed UCC, Frederick, MD

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