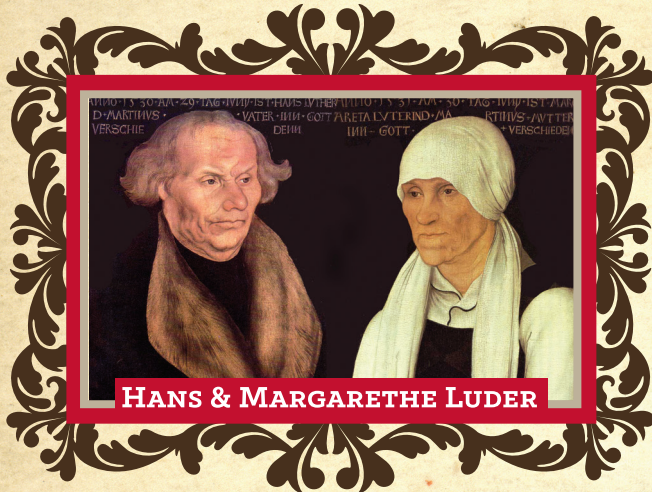


FACES OF THE REFORMATION

HANS & MARGARETHE (LINDEMANN) LUDER

Hans Luder: 1459–1530

Margarethe (Lindeman) Luder: ?–1531



REFORMATION
2017 It's *Still* All About
Jesus

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Forming a Reformer

THE PARENTS OF MARTIN LUTHER. Hans Luder (Luther) was the son of a peasant farmer. Due to inheritance laws, he was not eligible to come into the land of his father. He left his home village in Möhra to work in Eisleben, where Margarethe gave birth to a son. According to the Catholic tradition, they had the baby baptized the next day, November 11, which also was the Feast Day of St. Martin of Tours. Thus he was christened Martin. While he was still a baby, the family moved to Mansfield. One can assume that Hans was a smart, hard-working man. He advanced from a common laborer in the copper mines to the owner of his own copper mine. Before 25 years had passed, he owned at least six mines and two copper smelters and was a member of Mansfield's city council. A peasant he was born, a businessman he became. Some of this rise may have been due to the fact that Margarethe (also called Hanna) was from a respected family in Eisenach. It is probable that her family loaned the money necessary for Hans to buy his own copper mine. Copper mining was a risky profession. Like today's small business owners, they were not affluent, but hard working and frugal. Because Martin was from a family of both farmers and businessmen, he was acquainted with their struggles and could write on the condition of their lives with some accuracy.

Hans and Margarethe loved their children, but were strict in their parenting. Strictness seemed to be the order of the day. Years later Martin recalled receiving a beating from his mother so severe it drew blood. (His crime was taking a nut without permission.) School in Mansfield was equally strict. Beatings for not knowing the assigned lessons were common. The end of the week brought more beatings for any behavioral infractions recorded during the week. His lesson was learned: all transgressions must be atoned for. It is little wonder Martin advocated for education reform and treated his own children so tenderly.

He finished his last four pre-university years in Eisenach, staying with Heinrich Schalbe, a family friend on his mother's side. Schalbe treated him like a son, causing Martin to recall those years as much more pleasant. Stories of the young Martin as a poor, practically orphaned school boy singing for his supper seem to be more legend than fact. It may stem from a time when school children sang in the streets during holidays and were often rewarded with small treats.

In 1502 Martin finished a baccalaureate degree at the University of Erfurt, and by January 1505 he completed his master's degree. His future looked bright and his parents were optimistic about their sacrificial investment in his education. But God had other plans for Martin's life, and a lightning storm on July 2, 1505, played a hand in the turn of events. Caught in a severe storm and fearing for his life, Martin vowed to become a monk. This was more than a simple "foxhole prayer." For Martin it was a solemn oath to God. By September he had given away his possessions and joined the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. Hans' plans for his son were crushed. It was many years later when Hans and Martin made peace with the young boy's decision. Before he died, Hans left a sizable donation to the University of Wittenberg, where Martin taught.

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