From 1517 to 2017.
The Reformation and the power of Lutheran social ministry continues today.
In 1517 Martin Luther set out to reform the Roman Catholic Church.
And laid out his reform proposals in ninety-five theses.
But the theses didn’t just lay the groundwork for the Protestant movement.
These ideas also created a new approach to charity and service.
Because we are saved by grace we are free to care for one another.
Together with the Wittenberg Council, Luther established the Common Chest.
“For so to help a man that he does not need to become a beggar is just as much of a good work and virtue as to give alms to a man who has already become a beggar.” – Martin Luther
The Common Chest provided assistance to women and children, paid for education and vocational training and provided medical services.
In modern times, when churches and congregations organize to fulfill a need in their community, their work is known as social ministry.
In the United States, Lutheran social ministry grew significantly after the Civil War.
Today there are over 300 social ministry organizations in the United States caring for over six million Americans.
In 1997, Lutheran social ministry organizations united—along with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—to form Lutheran Services in America.
Lutheran Services in America +

300 Members
Lutheran Services in America + 300 Members = $21 Billion in Annual Revenue
1 in 50 Americans cared for each year
The call for Christians to care for all is as relevant today as it was 500 years ago.
As we look to the future, the organizations that make up Lutheran Services in America remain united.
As we look to the future, the organizations that make up Lutheran Services in America remain united.
United in our mission to strengthen communities, to tackle society’s most complex problems and to ensure that every person can achieve their full potential.
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