

## LutherFacts #35 – Art and the Reformation



By the late 1530s and early 1540s, Martin Luther's reform efforts in Germany reached even into the world of art. A case in point can be found in the lives of Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1555) and his son Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515-1586), both highly regarded Renaissance painters. The father became a prominent advocate for the Reformation with his paintings of reformers and of the woodcut images for Luther's German Bible. Both painters moved away from traditional religious icons to a stress on discipleship. They influenced other artists to create new Lutheran Altarpieces to replace the existing

ones. Examples are the stunning images found on the altar in Wittenberg's City Church, which depict the reformers as the Apostles at the Last Supper. Louis Cranach the Elder died as this work was underway and his son completed the painting. Together, the two men left a powerful legacy of religious art that helped Martin Luther convey his message. Today their combined body of work still provides valuable images of and insights into the Reformation.

Image: *Stadtkirche, Wittenberg, Cranach Alterbild*  
(self-photographed by Gunnar Bach Pedersen)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wittenberg\\_Stadtkirche\\_Cranachalter.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wittenberg_Stadtkirche_Cranachalter.jpg)