

## LutherFacts #39 – Death and Burial

Martin Luther's life came to an end in Eisleben, the city of his birth. In late January, 1546, he had arrived there to mediate a family dispute. He did this even as he struggled with a variety of health problems. While in Eisleben, Luther experienced a severe case of angina and died of a stroke on February 18, 1546. The University of Wittenberg decided to bury him in the University's Chapel Church, where he had posted the 95 Theses. After a three-day procession through towns filled with large crowds singing hymns and church bells ringing, Luther's body arrived in Wittenberg. Those attending gathered to pay tribute to the great reformer. The funeral sermon by fellow reformer Johann Bugenhagen lamented his passing but stressed that "we should also rightly recognize God's grace and mercy" for all he had achieved. Philipp Melanchthon then spoke on the enormous role his mentor had played in launching the Reformation. The younger faculty members then lowered his casket into a tomb placed in front of the pulpit. In this way, Martin Luther was honored in death, just as he had been throughout his life.