

# Luther vs. Erasmus

## A Medieval Debate about Freedom and Its Continuing Effects on the Modern World

*Presented by*

The Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization  
and University Lutheran Chapel

**8:30 a.m.**

Refreshments

University Lutheran Chapel, corner of Folsom and Colorado

**9–10 a.m.**

The Debate between Luther & Erasmus:  
Social & Theological Dimensions

in Historical Context—*Dr. Christopher T. M. West*

An examination of the social networks and divergent theological approaches of Luther and Erasmus, two giants of early modern Europe. Focus will be placed on the theological legacy of Augustine as both men approached tradition, free will, and grace.

**Dr. Christopher T. M. West** (PhD, Ancient Christianity and Medieval Studies, Yale University) is assistant professor of church history at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver. In his exploration of ancient and medieval Christianity, Dr. West emphasizes the reception of Augustine in the Western tradition. His current research investigates ancient Christian conceptions of the fall of the angels, especially in the context of the doctrines of evil, grace, and free will. Dr. West is a graduate of the University of Colorado (BA, Classics).



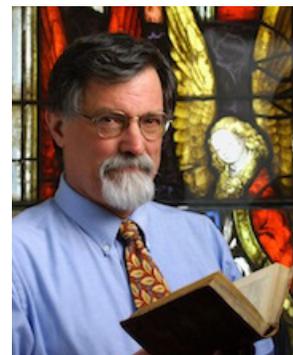
**10–10:30 a.m.** Break

10:30 –  
11:30 a.m.

## “Luther on Classical Education in The Bondage of the Will”—*Dr. E. Christian Kopff*

The debate between Erasmus and Luther concerned not only the freedom of the will and the clarity of Holy Scripture but also who best represented Humanism, that is, classical Christian education, which remains a relevant question today.

**Dr. E. Christian Kopff** (PhD, Classics, University of North Carolina) has taught at CU Boulder since 1973 and is a faculty member of the College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program. He also works with the Classics Department of the University of Urbino, Italy. An advocate of classical education, he is currently exploring why the most creative societies, including the founding fathers of the United States, were fascinated by the Greeks and Romans. In addition to hundreds of scholarly and popular articles, Dr. Kopff is the author of *The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition* (1999).



11:30 a.m. –  
1:30 p.m.

## Lunch

To register for a light lunch at University Lutheran Chapel, visit [universitylutheranchapel.com/about-2](http://universitylutheranchapel.com/about-2)

Dining also available on campus and in surrounding neighborhoods

1:30 –  
2:30 p.m.

## “Luther vs. Erasmus: Poetry, Power, and Pure Passivity”—*Dr. Carl P. E. Springer*

NEED SYNOPSIS

**Dr. Carl P. E. Springer** (PhD, Classics, University of Wisconsin, Madison) is SunTrust (Truist) Bank Chair of Excellence in the Humanities and Professor in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. The author of numerous books and articles on the Christian Latin poets of late antiquity, including Ambrose, Proba, and Sedulius, his recent scholarship has focused on the influence of the classics on the Reformation. His latest book is *Martin Luther's Latin Verse* (Bloomsbury, 2025); forthcoming is a monograph on Albrecht Dürer's *Four Apostles* (Brill, 2026).

