

# BOLD WOMEN READ

## gather

FOR FAITH AND ACTION



## Katherine, morning star

**T**he reformer Martin Luther wrote to his spouse with affectionate humor: “To my dear lady of the house, Katherine von Bora Luther, a preacher, beer brewer, gardener.” Sometimes he addressed her as “Lord Katie” or “my dear lady of the New Pig Market.” (There was a hog market near Katherine’s garden.) Recalling the story of Adam and Eve, he often called Katherine “my rib.”

Though some pious biographies characterized her as a docile housewife keeping busy with her embroidery as she ran the parsonage, Katherine von Bora (1499–1552) was in reality a strong, assertive businesswoman. She managed an enormous household. Her home, a former monastery, was a boardinghouse for university students and guests. Refugees from religious persecution could find shelter there. It was a hospital in times of plague. Katherine always deferred to Martin publicly, addressing him respectfully as Herr Doktor (Sir Doctor), but it is clear that she was the manager of the household. Many men thought Katherine was too outspoken, but she was a good match for her strong-minded husband. Like Martin, she remained true to her convictions, even when the world had different expectations.

*(excerpted from a Gather magazine article by Joy Schroeder)*

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