

October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – Reformation Sunday

## Introduction to the Day

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose teaching is life,  
whose presence is sure,  
and whose love is endless.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us  
with an open heart.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God our comforter:

**like lost sheep, we have gone astray.**

**We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.**

**We turn our faces away from injustice and  
oppression.**

**We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.  
Free us from our sin, gracious God.**

**Listen when we call out to you for help.**

**Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as  
ourselves.**

**Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in † Christ Jesus, God makes  
you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your  
sins.

**Amen.**

### Gathering Song

“A Mighty Fortress”

#504 vs. 1,2,4

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Lessons: Romans 12:6-8** – <sup>6</sup>We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30** - <sup>8</sup>To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

<sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

**Ephesians 4:11** - <sup>11</sup>The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.

### Children's Message

## **Gospel – Mark 12:28-34**

<sup>28</sup>One of the scribes came near and heard [Jesus and the Sadducees] disputing with one another, and seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup>you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup>The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” <sup>32</sup>Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; <sup>33</sup>and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” <sup>34</sup>When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

## **Message**

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

When Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenburg, he did it because he had hope for the church. He did it because he had an idea of what God was up to in the church, and the way the church was operating didn’t necessarily line up with it.

It was Luther’s belief, and his interpretation of scripture – God’s word, that we are justified by faith through grace. At the foundation of the reformation movement was the idea, the belief, faith in the promise that we are saved by God’s grace. A gift that we are freely given through Christ in Baptism.

What’s beautiful about this promise, the hope of this message, is that it wasn’t a one-time thing. Sure, Luther nailed the 95 theses to the Wittenburg church door 504 years ago, but the church, the Body of Christ, is continually being re:formed.

In the current state of church is the fear that church is dying. At least that is the case if you ask just about any publication that deals in the goings on of the church. Try to find an article about how the church is thriving, and you’ll likely have to slug through articles about how numbers have declined and no one is coming to church anymore, before getting to an article about what God is up to.

And it can be scary. And I’m with you. And if you’ve found those articles and shared them with me, I am absolutely not telling you that you are wrong. Because you are not. The numbers and the concern that they bring up are very real.

But.

While the numbers and the concern are very much real, I do not believe that they tell the whole picture of church today.

If they were the whole picture, then why are we here? Did we come to church today to hear about the imminent death of church as we know it? Or, did we come to church today because we want to be filled with the Good News of God’s Love for God’s People, and the hope that brings to a weary world?

If these numbers and the concern were the whole picture then why are we about to Affirm the Faith and the promises that were made in the baptism of 3 of our Freshman Students?

A couple of weeks ago in preparation for today we had our confirmation students take part in what is called a “Spiritual Gifts Inventory.” A Spiritual Gifts Inventory (and there are many versions) is an assessment tool that takes a person’s responses to a litany of questions and spits out what their top 3 gifts to the church and the world are. It was fascinating to talk with these young people and their leaders about what it is that they bring to the church now, and in the future.

We realized in our conversation that no two people taking the assessment came up with the same results. While there were certainly some similarities and some overlap, they weren’t really all that close.

For our three students our top 3 spiritual gifts were as follows.

#1 trait:

- Leadership
- Administration
- Mercy

#2 trait:

- Mercy
- Faith
- Discernment

#3 trait

- Apostleship
- Leadership
- Wisdom

And, we only covered 7 of the possible 19 spiritual gifts. I later asked my math friends how many possible combinations there are and, for all intents and purposes, it is essentially limitless. Okay, maybe not limitless, there are 5,814 possible combination. But, the chance any two of us in this room now would have the same lists is not great.

Why does this matter?

The list of Spiritual Gifts comes from scripture verses we just heard: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11.

These lists come from the early writings of Christians centuries ago. They were gifts that Paul saw in people of the church in that day, or, they were gifts that Paul KNEW the church would need to survive. And, they are gifts that we all have in the church today.

Leading up to our verses in Romans 12, Paul writes of our being a part of a larger body. That, though we are many members, we are of one body, the Body of Christ. And, each of us plays our role in that larger body. Paul knew that for the church in that day, that expression of the Body of Christ to not only survive, but thrive, then the gifts of all were going to need to be realized, celebrated, AND put to use!

In baptism we are given this hope that we all carry with us. In living out that hope, the promise of eternal life, we realize the gifts that we have been given. The gifts God uses in each one of us to live out the commandments that Jesus is asked about in our Gospel text.

Which is the greatest? There are 2.

Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.

All that we do as people of faith ought to be in accordance with those two commandments. Love God with your whole being. Love your neighbor as yourself.

If you haven't got those, then rituals and traditions are hollow.

People of God, the world would want you to think that church is dying and that coming to worship is a waste of your time. If you want to believe that, and you can, then it will. I urge you not to conform to that thinking, though. Rather, as long as we are living out the mandate to love God with every fiber of our being and love our neighbor as ourself, the church will not die, but rather be transformed.

Thanks be to God. Amen

**Song of the Day**

**“Blessed Be Your Name”**

**Affirmation of Baptism**

**Apostle's Creed**

## Prayers

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for all who long for a word of truth and for the radical grace that flows from the cross. Inspire congregations to freely and boldly proclaim your love for all people with persistence and hope. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for your creation, for mountains, rivers, streams, cities, homesteads, and neighborhoods. Write in our hearts a new love and care for creation. Give us the will to curb wasteful habits and to hold accountable those who neglect the vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We all live with the call to serve our neighbor. We pray for those in public office who live out that calling in that way. May we, and they, all be reminded that we are many members of one body. Pour wisdom and understanding upon all who govern so that communities of justice and peace may thrive. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all who long for healing in mind, body, or spirit (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, David Gunderson*). Strengthen hospitals, clinics, counseling centers, nursing homes, and recovery centers to be holy spaces of renewal that all might live the abundant life you intend. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all who seek to grow in faith and love of you. Guide teaching and learning in confirmation, small groups, Sunday school, youth groups, schools, seminaries, and universities. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for all the saints and reformers who have gone before us who dwell in your holy habitation. We remember this day, Martin Luther and all reformers of your church continually being transformed. Give us courage through their example to challenge unjust systems and work toward life-giving reformation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life.

**Amen.**

## Offering

### Offertory Prayer

God of abundance,

you cause streams to break forth in the desert  
and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.

Unite them with the offering of our lives

to nourish the world you love so dearly;

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me."

Once you've taken the elements say, "Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**"

### **Lord's Prayer**

### **Communion Prayer**

**Sending Song**                      **"The Lord Now Sends Us Forth"**                      **#538**

### **Blessing**

People of God,  
you are Christ's body,  
bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, † one God,  
bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Announcements**

**We celebrate today with Graham Ash, Carter Hatleli and Adyson L'Heureux as they Affirm their Baptism. Remember them in your prayers.**

### **For All the Saints**

There will be a service on Monday, Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. remembering all those we have lost. Join us in the sanctuary.

### **Operation Christmas Child**

The boxes are now available at the church for Operation Christmas Child. You can pick up a box and there is a label, so you know exactly what you to do with the boxes. Deadline to return them is Nov. 17.