

Reformation Sunday – October 29th, 2023

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.

**Greeting** – The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be God,  
the one who forms us,  
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,  
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility,  
confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,  
**you have revealed the ways of justice,  
yet we fail to follow you.**

**We are overwhelmed  
by the world’s violence and suffering.  
We are afraid to risk what we have  
for the sake of others.**

**For the harm we have caused,  
known and unknown, forgive us.  
For the unjust demands we place on others  
and your creation, forgive us.  
For the ways we turn away  
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.  
Lead us back to you  
and set us on the right path;  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,  
God’s justice stretches beyond all understanding.  
God’s compassion is beyond compare.  
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.  
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.  
**Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**

**“Rise, Shine, You People!”**

**#665 vs. 1,3,4**

**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.**

**Reading from Romans 3:19-28**

19Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

21But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, 22the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; 24they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; 26it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

27Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

## Children's Message

### Holy Gospel according to Saint John 8:31-36

<sup>31</sup>Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." <sup>33</sup>They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ**

### Sermon

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

Today, as church and with the larger church, we celebrate Reformation Sunday. A day we remember the work of Martin Luther and other reformers as they asked themselves, "is there really no other way?"

And, so often when we talk of Luther and the Protestant Reformation we speak of it in such a way that makes it seem that Luther came up with something entirely new.

And, perhaps, rightfully so. After all, there was a whole new branch of denominations born from the Reformation rooted in protest.

But, did Luther and the reformers actually think of anything new?

If we look at some of the basic pieces of Luther's Reformation we see a whole lot that should be nothing new to people of faith.

Grace – Did Luther think of this new concept? No. Luther was fully aware of God's grace.

God's love for God's people found in Jesus Christ - That wasn't Luther's idea.

That scripture points us to all of this – Again, Luther didn't write those passages.

Instead, Luther's understanding of these things shaped how Luther would look at his neighbor. Luther knew that he was free in Christ, not that he was free from sinning, but that sin didn't hold him captive.

Luther knew that while sin might hold power over him, it didn't have the final say. Rather, Luther knew that daily, in the promise of baptism, he and we are made new.

So, as Luther would famously ask, what does this mean? This is an important question for us as church to continue to ask today.

What does it mean, that 500+ years ago, the Reformers wondered if there maybe wasn't another way to go about living out God's grace in the world. It shifted from an understanding of God loving us unconditionally, therefore I must earn it, to God loves us unconditionally, therefore I ought to love others as well. Not so that we receive that love, but because we receive that love.

When Luther looked at what he knew in a new way, he was re-invigorated. Knowing what he knew to be true was not Luther inventing something new, rather it was Luther being shaped to treat others differently because of it.

Foundational to the Reformation movement is the core belief that the Bible and all that it is in is divinely inspired. Sola Scriptura. Scripture alone. This wasn't new. But, for Luther, it was invigorating. Through this lens, Luther's view of how others should be treated changed.

When so often we want to cling to tradition, it is Scripture that holds the power. It is scripture and what we find within that shapes how and who we are in the world, not our traditions.

A second foundational element of the reformation is the importance of faith over works. Sola Fide. Faith alone. Again, this wasn't new. It is in scripture that we find that faith without works is dead. Now, you might be asking, I thought you just said that faith comes before our works. And you'd be correct. God doesn't need our good works. But, our neighbor does. It is our faith alone in God that calls us to do good works for our neighbor. And if we only claim to be faithful, but that doesn't shape our interactions, then we have nothing.

Finally, the third foundational element of the reformation is the importance of grace over merit. We so often think of God's love as something we deserve, or something we earn, and that we are more or less deserving than others. Not the case. And this isn't new! Luther knew it is by God's grace that we have been saved, and there is nothing we can do about it! This changed him. It was invigorating.

So. What does this mean? What does it mean that we year mark the Reformers of the church, that didn't invent something new, but were re-invigorated by what they already knew?

We just wrapped up a series on what we value as a church. And guess what. None of what we proclaimed over the last five weeks is new. None of it. At all. But it is invigorating. Or at least it ought to be.

It ought to be invigorating as a church to proclaim that we will never waver on the fact that we value deep and meaningful relationship that cross generations for the sake of the Gospel. That ought to shape every single interaction we might have here and Sunday mornings, and beyond.

It ought to be invigorating that we live that out through a genuine welcome of all. It isn't new that a church would be welcoming, but it should re-invigorate to live out that genuine welcome. Worship that engages EACH of God's children isn't a new concept. But, how we live that out here ought to be invigorating. Nurturing faith together? Churches have been nurturing faith for generations. What does it mean then that we value doing that together? Finally, meeting the needs of our neighbors is something that has been critical to the Lutheran movement since its conception. So what then does it do for us that we declare it to be a value that we will not waver on?

People of God, none of this is new. All that we do is stuff that has been done in some way, shape, or form, for generations. Some since the beginning of time. But, in our discernment, we our re-invigorated, rejuvenated, and given hope for the future.

And, in the Reformation we are reminded that hope comes from God alone through Jesus Christ. We are reminded again and again of what we already know and believe to be true. That God loves us so much that God would give us Jesus to set us free. And in that we are made free each and every day.

It doesn't mean that we aren't going to slip up. It means that when we do we are embraced, made clean, and sent back out there.

It also doesn't mean that we aren't called to action. In fact it is the opposite. It is because of our freedom in Christ that we are called to act with and for our neighbor. Not so that we receive God's grace, but because we already have. And we will again. Again and again and again.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Song of the Day**

**“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”**

**#783 WOV**

**Apostle's Creed**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

God our parent, you call us your children and have made us siblings through your son Jesus. Heal the church's many divisions, bring understanding and peace where there has been contention and strife, and unite us in one body through the love of Christ. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God our creator, your hands have made the heights of the mountains, the depths of the sea, and the life that animates all creation. Bring relief to areas harmed by wildfires, floods, storms, and human carelessness (*especially*). Renew the face of the earth. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God our ruler, the nations rage and the kingdoms shake, but your word stands fast forever. Let your justice and peace roll down like waters wherever there is strife, injustice, war, or religious conflict (*especially*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God our champion, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Draw near to all who suffer (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Ada*). Be their rest and comfort. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God our reformer, you make all things new. Free us from complacency, open us to unexpected ways, and kindle zeal in us for the future. We pray for young people affirming their baptism. With them, stir in us a desire for your wisdom. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our savior, you made yourself known in the lives of all who have died in the hope of your grace. We give thanks for the witness of reformers like Martin Luther and for all whose example has brought us closer to you. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Offering**



# October Financial Snapshot

## Your Generosity in Action:

Did you know:

Our Trunk-or-Treat event isn't JUST an opportunity to give out candy, but a time to come together as a community of faith and make an impact in children's lives.

Last year Shepherd's Closet gave out wonderful fleece blankets that many families are still enjoying today!

See you THIS SATURDAY 2-4 pm

**THANK YOU!!**

Through October 25

Total Revenue **\$22,596**

1 More Sunday Offering

Total Expenses **\$24,398**

Difference to date:

**-\$1,802**

**Don't forget to turn in the form to order a poinsettia for the sanctuary for Christmas. Cost is \$13 and should accompany the form when you turn it in. Deadline is Nov. 12.**

### **Lunch at Good Shepherd Senior Apartments**

Join the GSSA residents for \$10 or \$11 for takeout.

Order by the Wednesday of the week prior.

Questions?

GSSA office (715-834-3587)

### **Veterans Day Concert**

The American Guild of Organists ad Sub-Zero Brass Quintet will present a concert on Saturday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church.

### **Stand in the Light Memory Choir Fall Concert "Love Wins!"**

Dress Rehearsal at 10 a.m. is open to the public, Evening Concert is at 6:30 p.m.