

REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 30th, 2022



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKTi9c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: Almighty God, gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and comfort them in all temptations, defend them against all enemies of Your Word, and bestow on the Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SERVICE CALENDAR OCTOBER 2022

Sunday, October 30th – Reformation [John 8: 31-36]
Luther's Chief part of the Catechism Service Order

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Exod. 20: 2-3 Wednesday: Rom. 3: 21-28 Friday: Gen. 15: 1-6
Tuesday: Rom. 1: 13-17 Thursday: John 8: 31-36 Saturday: Psalm 46

Musician: 10 a.m. – Louise Gondosch
Reader: 10 a.m. – Chris Mason

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Monday: 10:00 a.m. – Luther Manor Bible Study
Tuesday: 9:30—11:00 a.m. – Precious Moments
7:30 p.m. – Worship Committee (*note change from 7 p.m.*)
Thursday: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. – SOUL
Saturday: 10:30 a.m. – LCC Youth "Walking Together" (see note below)

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 a.m. (before service) the **first 2 Sundays of each month**. Our focus this year is on "*God's Good Rules, His 10 Commandments*". Parents are welcome to stay for a coffee and time to read their own devotions or join in Christian conversation.

PRECIOUS MOMENTS: We are thrilled to have our Precious Moments up and running again. If YOU or a "caregiver" you know has little ones (even babies), we invite them to join us. We meet at the church on Tuesday mornings between 9:30 - 11 a.m. The coffee and tea are always on (thanks to Judy!) and lots of playing, singing, stories, snack and a craft. Hope to see you!

YOUTH CATECHISM CLASS 2022 with Pastor Todd is a time for young people to see their own unique place in God's Story of love, acceptance, and new life in Jesus Christ. Scripture-rich lessons focus on our identity as Jesus' brothers and sisters through our Baptismal faith. Preparation for receiving Jesus' Body and Blood in the Bread and Wine for Holy Communion makes for a meaningful life-long faith journey. Part of Catechism class is learning how to participate in Sunday worship and undertake opportunities to serve and "live their faith" in small local outreach projects. Altar candle lighting, ushering and training for assistance in Sunday services will be an integral part of class. Regular attendance during our Sunday worship is a requirement of all students. Young people who are beginning grade 5 through grade 9 are welcome to join. The start date and time will be set in the near future. Please email PastorToddHoeffs@gmail.com to let him know your intention for class. Feel free to ask any and all questions you may have about this. *Your servant in Christ, Pastor Todd*

“WALKING TOGETHER” HIKE: LCC youth, young adults, families, and friends alike are invited to go for a hike on **Saturday, November 5th**, meeting at 10:30 a.m. at Dundas Valley Conservation Area. Following our walk, we will travel back to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burlington for a shared meal (courtesy of Trinity, Fisherville), social time, and to listen to our guest speaker, Rev. Saulo Bledoff (of St. John's, Snyder) speaking on the theme of **"Walking Together"**. We will continue the theme with an opportunity to worship together as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. For more information contact Louise 905-329-8579.



TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS URN FUNDRAISER/WORKSHOP: We are excited to be going to the **Watering Can in Vineland** (3711 King St), to make our **"own traditional urn"** through step by step instructions. It will take place **Friday, November 11th**. Fellowship starts at 5:30 p.m., bring your own wine or other beverage (goodies supplied). Cost is \$75.00 (\$10 going towards Haiti Lutheran Missions Society School feeding program). Friends are welcome to join us. Secure your spot by giving your registration money to Wendy Shook (905-380-6544) by Sunday, November 6th.



BUFFET DINNER

In honour of

Pastor Todd and Pastor John

Saturday, November 19th, 2022

CANCELLED – POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

LMWL-C/MARY MARTHA:

This is such an exciting time to welcome back and extend an invitation to everyone for our new Fall/Winter program. Please mark your calendars so that you may be able to join us:

Tuesday, November 15th - 7 p.m. Assembly of *Warm Feet for the Streets* sock blessings.

Saturday, November 26th - CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Tuesday, December 20th - 5:30 p.m. Advent/Christmas Dinner

We look forward to seeing familiar faces at our meetings and welcoming new faces! If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to call Lorraine at 905 964 5837!

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3: 14-16



LWML-C / MARY MARTHA PROJECT

“Warm Feet for the Street” Kits for “Out of the Cold”

We would appreciate your help by contributing any of the following:

- LARGE SOCKS
- Warm gloves (adult size)
- Hand-warmers
- Scarves
- Toothpaste & Toothbrushes
- Lip Balm
- Hand & Body Lotion
- Deodorant
- Shampoo (travel size)
- Kleenex (little pkgs.)
- Band-aids
- Combs (pocket size)
- Small Soaps
- Portals of Prayer (*or similar, from any month or year*)
- UNDERWEAR (new)

Place in the box in the Narthex from now until November 13th.

We will make up the Kits at our November 15th meeting.

Remember that everything needs to be small enough to fit into the socks!!!

If you would like to help, but prefer for us to do the shopping, a donation of money would be terrific too.

Contact Person: Wendy Hyatt

Christmas
Bazaar

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH, 2022
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

With “SILENT AUCTION”

Come and Invite all Your Friends and Relatives!!

SILENT AUCTION: We will have a Silent Auction at the Bazaar on and need donations. We could use bottles of wine, tickets to hockey games or gift cards for restaurants, etc. Please speak to Judy Mason if you can help.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE: Tim Reck, Fellowship Chairman, needs volunteers for Events. Please contact him if you can help.

Last Sunday Attendance: October 23rd, 2022 Attn: 10 a.m. – 89

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current:	283,291.00	5,554.73	1,751.00	166,420.66	(67,839.21)
LCC Missions	20,000.00	392.16	133.00	12,546.50	(3,991.96)
Property Improvement:			87.00	5,375.50	

OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES to Glenn & Carole Pink on the passing of Glenn's brother, Steve. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this very difficult time.

A MEMORIAL DONATION to SOUL has been given by the Zernikel Family in loving memory of Elvira's brother, Alexander.

FLOWERS have been placed on the altar this morning to the Glory of God by Andy & Bette Vasko and family in loving memory of Elmer Vasko.



SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOX GIFTS

Operation Christmas Child has become a Holiday tradition for many of us here at Christ Lutheran. The love and care put into every shoebox gift has changed the lives of children worldwide, and I think we can say it has changed us as well.

Together, let's continue to make these children an important part of our Christmas celebration by extending Christ's love and compassion.

www.samaritanpurse.ca

HOW TO PACK YOUR SHOEBOX:

1. Pick up a designated shoebox from the narthex.
2. Decide on the category and age. Girl/Boy 2-4; 5-9; 10-14
3. Fill the box, and put an elastic around it. Mark if for gender/age.
4. Place a \$10.00 cheque in the offering basket and the congregation will send a combined donation. You will be tax receipted by CLC.
5. Drop the box off at the Church by Sunday, November 13th.

SUGGESTED GIFTS:

- Toys: slinky, yo-yo, kazoos, animals, stickers, dolls, balls, cars
- School Supplies: pens, paper, stamps, markers, calculators, pencil crayons & sharpener, colouring books
- Hygiene Items: soap, toothbrush, comb, washcloth, NO toothpaste or shampoo
- Other: hard candy only, sunglasses, ball caps, socks, flip flops, watches, hairclips, T-shirts, underwear, small picture books, flashlights, batteries

Please DO NOT include: used items, war related items, medicines, cosmetics, breakable items, perishable foods, liquids (shampoo, etc.), gum

Boxes are available in the Narthex. Please return your filled box by November 13

Niagara's Mobile Closet: We know that some of you have been waiting to donate your winter coats/boots and now is the time! Along with our requests, we ask that you make sure **that all donated items are in new/gently used condition, no tears/rips or stains.** This would help us immensely since our sorting time is limited, we are huge on keeping waste to a minimal amount and most importantly, we want to freely give our absolute best! We know you get it and understand. **Needed are Men's clothes etc. ALL Sizes:** * Winter Coats, * Winter Boots, * Shirts - long sleeve, * T-Shirts, * Pants/Track-pants, * Hoodies, * Sweaters. Judy Mason will collect these items for 2-3 weeks. Thank You!

SEMINARY GUILD NOTE: Opportunity available to help Concordia Seminary as a Christ's contact person for the Seminary guild. This is the communicator/liaison between the guild and the local congregations. It is the Contact Person who works on getting memberships, and the distribution of the newsletter. Contact persons submit annual memberships on a form on the Seminary website. Please see Lorraine if you are interested. Thank you,

Notice to Church Extension Fund Depositors: The Church Extension Fund (CEF) is winding down its operations and as of now all depositors with current addresses have received their deposited funds plus the interest owing. However, we have a number of unclaimed savings accounts and savings certificates as we do not have current contact information for these. If you or someone you know thinks they may have a CEF account which has not been redeemed, please contact Darryl Holland at: 800-465-8179 ext4 or dholland@lcceast.ca. Also if you are in possession of God Bank Savings Stamps or Tracky Stamps, these too can be redeemed by returning the books or stamps to: Lutheran East District, 275 Lawrence Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3.

MARTIN LUTHER'S CATECHISM SERVICE

Adapted from the Six Chief parts of the Catechism

REFORMATION DAY 505

October 30, 2022 + 10 AM Worship

BEGINNING HYMN:

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

Tune: LSB # 657

**A Migh-ty Fort-ress is our God, a sword and shield victo--rious!
He breaks the cru-el op-pressor's rod, and wins sal-vation glor-ious.
The old sat-an-ic foe, has sworn to work us woe.
With craft and dread-ful might, He arms Him-self to fight.
On earth He has no e—qual!**

**No strength of ours can match His might, we would be lost re—jected.
But now a Champ-ion comes to fight, Whom God Himself el—ected.
You ask who this may be? The Lord of Hosts is He.
Christ Jes-us Mighty Lord, God's only Son adored!
He holds the field victo—rious!**

Reprinted from: LSB # 657 © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship translation

INVOCATION & BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCE:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

The Ten Commandments reveal to us the severity of our sin, for they call us to love God with our whole being and love our neighbours as ourselves.

You shall have no other gods.

We confess that we put other things above our fear, love, and trust in God.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

We confess that we do not call upon His name in every trouble, nor do we always pray, praise, and give thanks to God for all that we have.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

We confess that we do not always hold it sacred and gladly hear and keep God's Word.

Honour your father and your mother.

We confess that we do not always honour them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them, nor others in authority over us.

You shall not commit adultery.

We confess that we are not pure in all we say and do, and we do not always love and honour our spouses nor avoid desires of the flesh.

You shall not steal.

We confess that we do not always help our neighbours to improve and protect their possessions and income. We also have not shared our possessions and income with all those in need.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

We confess that we do not always defend our neighbours, or speak well of them, or explain everything in the kindest way.

You shall not covet.

We confess that we do not always help our neighbours keep their property and family relationships.

For all of our thoughts, words and actions, sinful things known and unknown to us, whereby we have brought offence to You, O Father, and to one another, we are truly sorry and seek mercy, forgiveness and newness of life. Amen.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

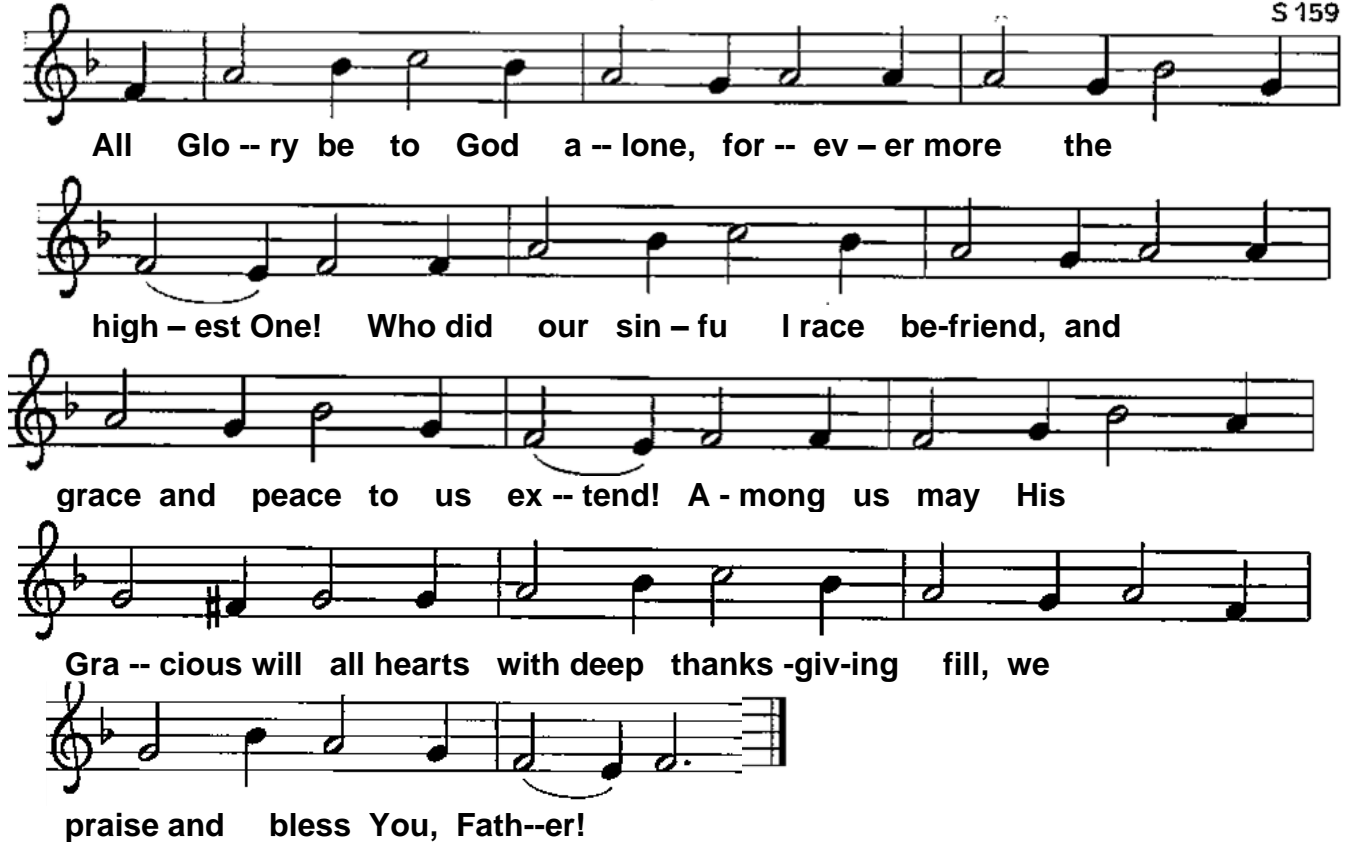
GLORY TO GOD

"All Glory Be To God

(LSB Tune # 947)

www.hymnary.org

S 159



All Glo -- ry be to God a -- lone, for -- ev -- er more the
high -- est One! Who did our sin -- fu I race be-friend, and
grace and peace to us ex -- tend! A - mong us may His
Gra -- cious will all hearts with deep thanks -giv-ing fill, we
praise and bless You, Fath--er!

Lord God, our King on Heav'n's high throne,
O Lord, the sole-begotten One
Dear Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, true God from all eternity,
O Lamb of God, to You we flee, You take the whole world's sins away,
Have mer-cy on us Je-sus!

Text & Music: Martin Luther, trans. G.Pollack, 1890-1950, public domain

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Almighty God, Gracious Lord, we thank You that Your Holy Spirit renews Your Church in every age. Pour out Your Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep them firm in Your Word, protect and comfort them in time of trial, defend them against all enemies of Your saving Gospel, and bless the Church with Your saving peace. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament: *Jeremiah 31: 31-34*

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: *Romans 3: 19-29*

[St. Paul writes:] Now 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. For 'no human being will be justified in his sight' by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now, irrespective of law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom 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; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR ANTHEM – “Ancient Words”

Holy words long preserved, for our walk in this world
They resound with God's own heart -- O let the ancient words impart
Words of life words of hope; Give us strength help us cope
In this world where'er we roam; Ancient words will guide us home
Ancient words ever true, changing me and changing you
We have come with open hearts -- Oh let the ancient words impart.

The Holy Gospel: *John 8: 31-36*

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' 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"?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Holy words of our faith --Handed down to this age
Came to us through sacrifice; Oh heed the faithful words of Christ
Ancient words ever true; Changing me and changing you
We have come with open hearts --Oh let the ancient words impart
In this world where'er we roam. Ancient words will guide us home
We have come with open hearts, Oh let the ancient words impart!

*CCLI Song # 2986399 -- Lynn DeShazo; © 2001 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music)
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From Luther's Small Catechism:

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water.

Instead, it is water used according to God's command

And connected with God's Word.

What does baptizing with water show us?

that the old Adam in us should,

by daily sorrow and renewal, be drowned and die with all sins, and,

a new person daily rises up, living before God in righteousness for all times.

GOSPEL SONG "In Christ Alone"

1. In Christ a - lone my hope is found, He is my
light, my strength, my song. This Corner - stone, this sol-id
Ground - Firm through the fierc- est drought and
Storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are
stilled, when striv-ings cease; My Com-fort-er, my All in
All here in the love of Christ -- I stand. →

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid -- here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious Day, up from the grave He rose again.
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine - bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home - here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand!

Words & Music by Keith Getty & Stuart Townsend © 2002 Kingsway Music

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CCLI # 3350395

MESSAGE



1 We all be - lieve in one true God, Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,
 2 We all be - lieve in Je - sus Christ, Son of God and Mar - y's son,
 3 We all con - fess the Ho - ly Ghost, Who from both in truth pro - ceeds,



Ev - er - pre - sent help in need, Praised by all the heav'n - ly host;
 Who de - scend - ed from his throne And for us sal - va - tion won;
 Who sus - tains and com - forts us In all tri - als, fears, and needs.



All he made his love en - folds, All cre - a - tion he up - holds.
 By whose cross and death are we Res - cued from all mis - er - y.
 Blest and ho - ly Trin - i - ty, Praise for - ev - er yours shall be.

*Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619-84; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829-78, alt.
 Tune: Kirchengesangbuch, Darmstadt, 1699*

WIR GLAUBEN ALL AN EINEN GOTT
 8 7 7 7

THE OFFERINGS are gathered.

PRAYERS DRAWN FROM THE CATECHISM:

O Lord, our God, You teach us to have no other gods in the place of You. May we respect, love and trust in You above anything or anyone else. As we keep Your holy day, help us never neglect Your Word or its proclamation or Your Sacraments of grace. Let us ever regard the church and her gifts as beneficial for ourselves and for our neighbours. As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

Your Son, Jesus Christ, is our Lord and Redeemer. At great cost He saved us all not with gold or silver but with His most precious Blood and innocent death on the cross. Thanks be to You that through Christ we are Your own, living under You and in Your Kingdom. May we serve You in here in time and forever in eternity where Your rule is supreme. As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

Your Holy Spirit enables us to believe in Jesus Christ, which we could not do on our own. We are grateful that You have called us by the Gospel through the Church. Bless

our parish, our sister churches, our district and Synod and all Christians who gather around Your Word and Holy Meal. Preserve the church from succumbing to worldly interests. Help us all witness the faith You have sewn in our hearts. Give us wise vision for the future as we depart forgiven and set free. As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

You give daily bread to all people of the earth. For this we give our thanks. May we enjoy food and clothing, home and property, work and income, family life, orderly community, good government, favourable seasonal weather, health, strength, a good name with true friends and neighbours. As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

We are humbly grateful for all the benefits You bless us with in our Baptisms. May we daily be drowned in the watery remembrance that all sins, devilish traps and threats of hell are gone and we rise up in our Baptism forgiven and set free.

As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

Help us be rightly prepared for all that we face in this life. Be with those who face illness or pain, anxiety or medical intervention, especially we remember before You..... Inspire our compassion towards them and all who suffer. May Your Sacrament of Holy Communion comfort them and us as simple eating and drinking brings the Body and Blood of Christ to our lips and hearts. As this is most certainly true—

listen to our prayers, O God.

O God, thank You for grace, love and mercy which helps us gladly do as You teach and trust in You always; through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: ***Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name...***

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER:

I thank You, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger. And I pray that You would keep me this day, also, from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe have no power over me. Amen.

SENDING

BENEDICTION:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord upon you with favour, + and give you peace.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN:

"Lord, Help Us Ever To Retain"

LSB # 865



1 Lord, help us ev - er to re - tain The Cat - e -
 2 Help us Your ho - ly Law to learn, To mourn our
 3 Hear us, dear Fa - ther, when we pray For need - ed
 4 Lord, when we fall or go a - stray, Ab - solve and



chism's — doc - trine plain As Lu - ther taught the
 sin and from it turn In faith to You and
 help from day to day That as Your chil - dren
 lift us up, we pray; And through the Sac - ra -



Word of truth In sim - ple style to ten - der youth.
 to Your Son And Ho - ly Spir - it, Three in One.
 we may live, Whom You bap - tized and so re - ceived.
 ment in - crease Our faith till we de - part in peace.

Text: Ludwig Helmbold, 1532–98; tr. Matthias Loy, 1828–1915, alt.
 Tune: *As hymnodus sacer*, Leipzig, 1625; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941

HERR JESU CHRIST, MEINS
 L M

Text and music: Public domain

Ps. 119:9–12; Ex. 20:1–17; Deut. 6:4–9

REV. TODD HOEFFS

Reformation 505 – Pentecost 21

John 8:31-38

“Christ sets Us Free From....????”

October 30, 2022

Tomorrow is the 505th Anniversary of Brother Martin attaching his list of 95 statements of concerns for discussion onto the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. And that's all he was looking for: debate, discussion and a meeting of the minds. Realising that the church's marketing scheme of selling God's forgiveness was wrong. And that all of us are ALREADY FORGIVEN AND ACCEPTED by God With the gift of faith in Jesus. Period. That's the heart of the Gospel. This ideal stood as a threat to the power structures And church leaders wished Martin dead. Many of us sitting here would think "Oh, what did Luther expect from church leaders?!" But naive handling of leadership in the middle ages is not the same as we see politics now. We've been burned by decades of deception and mass media exposures. In the 16th century, the church sat at the top of the triangle in a well-arranged hierarchy of church, empire, and household. It was *illegal* not to be a Christian. Jews were given some leeway but were pushed into their own ghettos. Many outspoken Christians wound up dead for questioning doctrine. Compare that to today: Church attendance and faith loyalty is at an all-time low. A Canadian census from 2015 revealed a growing number of NONES – no -religion. At about 22 percent. Pre-Covid it was 30 percent. I publicly confessed my Baptismal faith by Confirmation 36 years ago today. I think 2 others out of my class still are active in church worship life. Most of the people we know as a family don't go to church. They're not anti-church, just uninformed. Back in the early 2000s when I pastored in Edmonton, Kids in the church neighbourhood loved skateboarding on our handicapped ramp. One day I left a few beverages out for them to drink. Then once they knocked on the door to use the bathroom. I let them tour the church. All but one never went inside a church. They pointed to everything asking what it was. Cross. Altar. Image of Jesus. One of them came back to a VBS...When we had a Sunday outdoor church service with it. People are looking. But they don't know what to look for or who to trust. We wouldn't want a return to the Middleages, Making attendance compulsory or mandate believing exactly the same way. Perhaps within the dying of the loyalties from the past is actually an opportunity for new growth – the rising of a church centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because Martin Luther himself viewed the church as
Ever
always
reforming.
Changing.
Transforming.
This happens by CONTINUING IN JESUS' WORD Literally, abide, LIVE in His WORD. Living is not boring or stagnant. Living isn't the same old same old --- at least it shouldn't be.... Not when living is in Christ. We become ONE with Him and His Word. It may take forms of daily Bible reading. It may be the Word you heard all lifelong pops up into memory. It may take the form that living your lie the Word is working on you. Living in Jesus is a relationship faith bond. When we live in relationship with people we listen and respond. SO too with our Lord. [COMMUNICATE = prayer life!]
Jesus promises amazing results too! You show yourself to be a disciple! Now, that name, disciple, should make us feel good, but not full of pride. A disciple is not a boss, not an expert, but a follower and a learner. An image of human growth within the body of Christ on earth. So by living in Jesus, living in His Word, being His follower, We grow into knowing the truth. We know what Jesus knows.

Jesus aligns our will with His will. And that truth sets you free. Freedom has gotten a lot attention in the last 2 years.

Freedom is misunderstood now as it was then. Jesus' audience of believing Jews are not expecting to wrestle with some new idea of truth and freedom. In the Hebrew culture, freedom came through deliverance by God from trouble, through the muscle of a King with the ability to live without threat of slavery [as with Egypt and Babylon]. The Greek and Roman world viewed freedom as having knowledge of what one can and cannot control. Jesus enters into all of this bring a new era of freedom. The only way anyone can be free and Arrive at their TRUE self Is surrendering one's will (and power) to a loving, external Kingdom (which is in JESUS). This truth is at the heart of the crowd's arrogant response. We tend to like freedom as long as we're not reminded what we are free FROM. While they may assume Jesus refers to Egypt or Babylon or Greece Or even the Roman rule over Israel, SLAVERY TO SIN is His concern. That's the root of all problems.

It's not always an easy concept to grasp. Sin isn't just about the bad things we do that show.

Sin is about a state of being, a condition in which we are all trapped. We are slaves of it in that we can't help but serve sin. We are unable on our own to change course and return to God.

Human sin brews in us an insecurity that we're never good enough, never worthy of love, that we're simply never enough. So we try to elevate ourselves in our own ways At the expense of others. We dim the lights of others, downplay what others do or don't do -- but it never makes our own little bulbs shine any brighter. This is what causes us to do things and think things that hurt others. Jesus frees you and me FROM all this. Because sin is what stands in the way between us and a life with God. We must be made right. We must have sin removed. We must have Jesus' life in us for our lives to grow. It means because of Jesus it's as if you never sinned at all.

The sin disease is cured. Satan now is powerless to harm you. Death will be the last doorway to pass but you pass in Jesus. Because Jesus, the Son, HAS SET YOU FREE!

His crucifixion deflates all pride, anger, insecurity, loss and arrogance. The rough wood cross rubs Satan the wrong way – His fate is sealed. While Jesus' blood cleanses you it also chains the devil to hell. But that's not all. Jesus hasn't just freed you from something, He's also freed you FOR something – Living as true disciples. This involves loving God and loving your neighbour.

That's living in the Word..That's how freedom ought to be viewed. Not to do as we please.

Not to push back for the sake of rebelling. We are each others' keepers. We are salt and light and witnesses and truth sayers and peace makers in the world. We are to see the world as Jesus sees it – in need of love, life and light. We are free because God is truly 100 % always in control.

God's love and forgiveness does not depend on us at all. His grace is a purely living gift.

And so --- So ... if salvation is all God's doing (yes) – and it's free (yes)– and God covers us with forgiveness, Grace and love (yes, yes and yes) – does it really matter what I do?

Yes. Of course. We are Jesus' face and hands and feet and mouths in the everyday world.

We are called, gathered and enlightened in Baptism by the Holy Spirit as agents of peace.

Our discipling is never done in this life. We continue, living – that is Abide, in His Word.

How you live and what you accomplish is holy and right because of who God has called you to be.

You are brothers and sisters to Christ Jesus. God has claimed you. You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. And so, freed by Christ FROM all that stands in your way – and freed FOR living the life of a follower of Christ – loving and serving God and neighbor, Jesus invites you ALL to “continue” that is “abide” and “LIVE” into his Word so that you may know the truth – and the truth may set YOU free. THIS is GOOD News. God's love is so complete, so all-encompassing, so unlimited that God forgives and forgets everything, even what we cannot. Only God's love ultimately defines us. God is the only one who knows us completely. And God, knowing all of that, has chosen to call us beloved children. God has chosen to call us holy and precious in God's own sight.

That is what defines us. And that is what frees us. Because God loves us just as we are.

In God's eyes we are enough. By living in Jesus, His life in your life is also enough. His cross is enough to get you through. His Flesh and Blood in the Bread and Wine gives you the meal

Which always satisfies faith to trust in Him more and more.

We're free from all of that.

Free from the past.

Free from fear.

Free from regrets.

Free from mistakes.

Free from it all.

Whether it seems possible to us or not.

Set free

For others.

In Jesus.

For another 505 years.

Amen.

REFORMATION COLOURING PAGE

