

Reformation Sunday

Sunday, October 25, 2020

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
215 N. Warren St.
Orwigsburg, PA
570-366-2316
www.stpauls-orwigsburg.org

GATHERING

Where responses are indicated, please respond quietly.

PRELUDE

8:00 AM	"Built on a Rock"	E. Broughton
10:30 AM	"Joyous Proclamation" Bell Choir	R. Mallory

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

**so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PEACE

In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled us to himself. Let us also be reconciled to one another. The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

GATHERING HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress”
[See back of bulletin]

#504 vs 1 & 2

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.

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.

WORD

A Reading from Jeremiah

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It 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. ³³But 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. ³⁴No 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.

(Jeremiah 31:31–34)

Psalm 46

¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

²**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶**The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸**Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰**“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

A Reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

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. (Romans 3:19–28)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³They 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’?”

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

(John 8:31–36)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Amazing Grace”

#779 vs 1, 2, 5

[See back of bulletin]

SERMON

THE NICENE CREED (Read in Unison)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world,
and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Renew and inspire the church in the freedom of the gospel, O God. Where the
church is in error, reform it. Where the church speaks your truth, strengthen it.
Where the church is divided, unify it. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

As the earth changes, as mountains shake and the waters roar, may we care for this planet as a holy habitation for all living things. Sustain all peoples and lands recovering from natural disasters of any kind. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Guide areas of the world divided or traumatized by conflict. Free all from slavery and human trafficking and protect all in harm's way. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Release those living in bondage to debts, chronic pain, or addiction. Grant healing touch to those who are sick, ill, or troubled (*we especially pray for everyone whose name is written on our prayer list*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We give thanks for courageous voices that have remained firm in their commitment to the one who frees us from sin and death. Centered in your grace, unify us in the hope of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Even in death, you free us and give us a place in your house. We give thanks for all men and women who have shown us your truth and freedom, especially Martin Luther and those who work for the renewal of the church. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Read in Unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the LORD look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress”
[See back of bulletin]

#504 vs 3 & 4

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“A Mighty Fortress”

D. Cherwien

Our Liturgy and Music are used by permission through Augsburg Fortress License #20611.

Altar flowers are presented in memory of Jack Taylor by Skip and family.

Chancel Flowers are presented in memory of Rachel E. Zehner by Sonny and
Connie Teter.

Bulletins are presented in honor of our son, Dutch Brensinger, by Darin and Crystal
Brensinger.

HAVE A MEMORY OR STORY TO SHARE?

Being flexible within COVID-19 is almost becoming the norm! The STiC group has not been able to find a meeting day and time that suits everyone. For now, group members are exchanging ideas and plans via email. With the recent rise in reported COVID-19 cases, we are being very careful.

We would like to open our email group up to *everyone*, so that even if you are not officially signed up for the group, you can still share everyone’s stories and memories. Think back to your earliest favorite memory from time spent out of doors and in a few words, share it with us. Email your story or thoughts to Sue at kidsingaround@comcast.net. We hope to have a storytelling event sometime in the future after we pass the “all clear” signal.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY (10/25/20)

8:00 AM

LECTOR: Deb Moyer; GREETER: Carl Heintzelman

10:30 AM

LECTOR: Jason Swick; USHER: Madelyn Knecht; GREETER: Doug Travor

ALTAR GUILD: Kathy Miller and Connie Teter

COUNTERS: Connie Teter, Joanne Emerich, and Barb Sterner

SERVING NEXT SUNDAY (11/1/20)

8:00 AM

LECTOR: Deb Moyer; GREETER: TBA

COMMUNION ASSISTANT: TBA

10:30 AM

LECTOR: Cindy Ritschel; USHER: Jim Spotts; GREETER: Greg Sklar

COMMUNION ASSISTANT: Jeff Ritschel

ALTAR GUILD: Kathy Miller and Connie Teter

COUNTERS: Gwen Wehr, Tom Wehr, and Glenda Bright

Introduction to the day: Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed 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.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE NEWS

Our Evangelism Committee will participate in our community Halloween parade on Wednesday, October 28. The parade forms at 6:30 PM and begins at 7:00 PM. We thank Scott Butler for providing his truck for this event. The Lions Club has informed us that candy may only be distributed by those walking along the route and cannot be thrown from vehicles. If you would like to participate in this event, contact any committee member or phone Connie Teter at 570-366-0255.

The Committee will also provide Halloween candy treat bags to local “trick-or-treaters” on Thursday, October 29 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM from the front of the church. For more information, contact Connie Teter at 570-366-0255.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON: SET FREE

A colleague of mine once pointed out that Martin Luther wrote far more about freedom than he did about reform or reformation. Liberation in Christ through faith was the freedom that transformed Luther. This freedom is what he wrote about most frequently and most passionately. In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther makes the case that liberation in Christ is both a freedom **from** and a freedom **for**.

Freedom **from** is liberation from all spiritual bondage. We are set free from being trapped in ourselves, consumed by ourselves, from the belief and terror that we can and must save ourselves. That our **self** is the center of the universe. Life in Christ is not an inward-dwelling experience. We are free to get over ourselves.

Freedom **from** is liberation from the law's accusation and judgment. We are liberated from terror and despair, which are soul crushing. We are liberated from the incessant and impossible task of measuring up.

Freedom **from** liberates us from estrangement from God and God's creation. Caught in sin and standing before a God who demands righteousness when we believe that we are either responsible for or capable of affecting our own salvation, breeds resentment toward God and the objectification of others.

Luther says it simply in his Small Catechism: Jesus Christ "is my Lord ... he has redeemed me ... purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."

Freedom **for** means that in Christ we are set free to love and serve others. Freedom is a relationship, not a new set of activities or the demand of a new law. Many activists and pietists move immediately to a set of activities to define freedom, but Luther stayed with relationships. In Christ the faithful are new creatures who are opened into newly reconciled and liberated relationships with God, with other creatures and even with oneself.

In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther makes the case that liberation in Christ is both a freedom **from** and a freedom **for**.

Luther put it this way: "Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is a living, busy, active thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. ... And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown them this grace" (*Luther's Works*, 35:370-1).

I believe that Luther turned the argument that freedom is the problem and that our free will is what got us expelled from the garden and into this world of hurt on its head. The argument goes that we have been given free will, we misuse or abuse that gift, and in this freedom we make poor choices. Our only hope is that we give up or renounce this freedom and submit ourselves to the rule of God. Only when we are captive to God's will, will we find redemption.

This argument assumes that we are free and that we can will ourselves into cooperating with God's saving work. Once again it becomes about us and about what we must do in order to be saved. Luther makes the shift that we start out captive to sin and, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are set free.

The problem isn't too much freedom, it's that we are not free. When we confess that "we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, page 95), it should be with a sense of relief!

Reformation scholar Timothy Wengert posed the question, "What am I going to do now that I don't have to do anything?" Serve God and neighbor in beautiful freedom.

October 2, 2020

GATHERING HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress”

#504 vs 1 & 2

1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -
 2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -

to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and
 ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom

wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe
 God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?

has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might
 The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,

he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.
 God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Amazing Grace”

#779 vs 1, 2, 5

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

SENDING HYMN

"A Mighty Fortress"

#504 vs 3 & 4

3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat - 'ning to de -
4 God's Word for - ev - er shall a - bide, no thanks to foes, who

your us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they
fear it; for God him - self fights by our side with

can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;
weap - ons of the Spir - it. Were they to take our house,

in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;
goods, hon - or, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched a - way,

God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.
they can - not win the day. The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!