



Celebrate

Reformation Sunday

October 29, 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.

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.**

First Reading

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

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. 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.

The LORD of hosts is with us; the
God of Ja - cob is our strong - hold.

- God is our ref-¹uge and strength,
a very present¹ help in trouble.
- ²Therefore we will not fear, though the¹ earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths¹ of the sea;
- ³though its waters¹ rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble¹ with its tumult.
- ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the cit-¹y of God,
the holy habitation of¹ the Most High.
- ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall¹ not be shaken;
God shall help it at the¹ break of day.
- ⁶The nations rage, and the¹ kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth¹ melts away. **R**
- ⁷The LORD of¹ hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob¹ is our stronghold.
- ⁸Come now, regard the works¹ of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought up-¹ on the earth;
- ⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in¹ all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
and burns the¹ shields with fire.
- ¹⁰“Be still, then, and know that¹ I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted¹ in the earth.”
- ¹¹The LORD of¹ hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob¹ is our stronghold. **R**

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

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. 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.

Gospel

John 8:31-36

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

Jesus 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."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

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.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 119:41-48. **Tuesday** (Reformation Day) John 8:31-36. **Wednesday** (All Saints Day) Matthew 5:1-12. **Thursday** Psalm 43. **Friday** (commemoration of Martín de Porres, renewer of society, died 1639) 2 Peter 2:1-3. **Saturday** Malachi 1:6—2:9. **All Saints Sunday** Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12 *or* **Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost** Micah 3:5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12.

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God our champion, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Draw near to all who suffer (*especially*). 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.