

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Reformation Sunday, Year A

Introduction

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.

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.

Psalm: Psalm 46

The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Ps. 46:7)

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 cit- | y 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. R**

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 up- | on 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. R

Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28

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.

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.

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.

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.”

Upcoming Commemorations

**Philipp Nicolai, died 1608; Johann Heermann, died 1647; Paul Gerhardt, died 1676;
hymnwriters**

Monday, October 26, 2020

These great hymnwriters all worked in seventeenth-century Germany in times of war and plague. Nicolai, a pastor, lost 1,300 parishioners to plague, 170 in one week. He wrote "O Morning Star, how fair and bright" and "Wake, awake, for night is flying." Heermann's hymns, including "Ah, holy Jesus," often express the emotions of faith. Gerhardt, perhaps the greatest Lutheran hymnwriter, was a pastor in Berlin.

Simon and Jude, Apostles

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

We know little about these apostles. Simon is listed as "the zealot" or Cananean in New Testament lists. Jude, also called Thaddeus, asked Jesus at the last supper why he had revealed himself to the disciples but not to the world.

Reformation Day

Saturday, October 31, 2020

By the end of the seventeenth century, many Lutheran churches celebrated a festival commemorating Martin Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses, a summary of abuses in the church of his time. At the heart of the reform movement was the gospel, the good news that it is by grace through faith that we are justified and set free.

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