

November 3, 2019

**Reformation Sunday**

Organist: Teresa Bernthal

Usher: Darrin Ream

Acolyte: Mason Kuehne



**LORD, KEEP US  
STEADFAST IN THY WORD!**



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## PRE-SERVICE MEDITATION

*Psalm 119:33-48*

<sup>33</sup> Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. <sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. <sup>35</sup> Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. <sup>36</sup> Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! <sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. <sup>38</sup> Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. <sup>39</sup> Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. <sup>40</sup> Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life! <sup>41</sup> Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise; <sup>42</sup> then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me, for I trust in your word. <sup>43</sup> And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules. <sup>44</sup> I will keep your law continually, forever and ever, <sup>45</sup> and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts. <sup>46</sup> I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, <sup>47</sup> for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. <sup>48</sup> I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.

## ✠ Order of Divine Worship ✠

### OPENING PRAYER

**P** Pastor

**C** Congregation

**HYMN: WS #775:1-4**

**“Thy Strong Word”**

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

**C** Amen!

### RESPONSIVE PSALMS

*Ps. 119; Ps. 2; Ps. 31*

**P** Oh LORD, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

**C** **You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me.**

**P** I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.

**C** **I understand more than the ancients, because I keep your precepts.**

**P** How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

**C** **Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.**

**P** Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**HYMN: TLH #261:1**

**“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”**

**C** ♪ **Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word; Curb those who gain by craft and sword  
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son And set at naught all He hath done.**

**P** Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?

**C** **The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,**

**P** Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

**C** **“Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.”**



- P** He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision.
- C** **Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure:**
- P** “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”

**HYMN: TLH #261:2**

**“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”**

- C** *♩ Lord Jesus Christ, Thy power make known, For Thou art Lord of lords alone; Defend Thy Christendom that we May evermore sing praise to Thee.*
- P** In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness.
- C** **Bow down Your ear to me, deliver me speedily; be my rock of refuge a fortress of defense to save me.**
- P** For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me and guide me.
- C** **Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength.**
- P** Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

**HYMN: TLH #261:3**

**“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”**

- C** *♩ O Comforter of priceless worth, Send peace and unity on earth. Support us in our final strife And lead us out of death to life.*
- P** God our Father *has* preserved His Word for us. It is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Our Lord Jesus *has* made His power known. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father and will come to judge the world. God the Holy Spirit *has* extended God's grace to us through Word and Sacrament. But we have not kept the Word of our Lord. I now ask you, therefore, before God who searches the heart: Do you confess the sins you have committed in thought, word, and deed; do you repent of them, believe on the Lord Jesus for forgiveness, and sincerely intend, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to lead a godly life from now on?
- C** **I do so confess, believe, and intend with the help of God.**
- P** Upon this your confession, I, as a called servant of God's Word, announce the grace of God unto you. In the stead of my Lord Jesus Christ, and by His command, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Let us praise our gracious God!

**HYMN: TLH #261:4**

**“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”**

- C** *♩ Glory to God the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One! To Thee, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!*

**EPISTLE READING – Romans 3:19-28** Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the

righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

**PSALMODY WS p. 33**

**"He Who Dwells"**

**GOSPEL READING – Matthew 9:1-8** And Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

**P** Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

These words are writ - ten that we may be-lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

## A REFORMATION CONFESSION OF FAITH

*We boldly confess what we believe using the following words from the Formula of Concord – on Justification by Faith.*

- ☐ **“We unanimously believe, teach, and confess the following about the righteousness of faith before God:**

**A poor sinful person is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and is adopted into sonship and inheritance of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own.**

**This happens without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone. His obedience is credited to us for righteousness. These treasures are brought to us by the Holy Spirit in the promise of the holy Gospel.**

**Faith alone is the only means through which we lay hold on, accept, apply, and take them for ourselves. This faith is God’s gift, by which we truly learn to know Christ, our Redeemer, in the Word of the Gospel and trust in Him. We trust that for the sake of His obedience alone we have the forgiveness of sins by grace, are regarded as godly and righteous by God the Father, and are eternally saved.”**

**HYMN: TLH #262**

**“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”**

**SERMON – 2 Kings 23:1-3** Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. <sup>2</sup> And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant.

### **Reformation in the Here and Now**

I. NOW is the right TIME

II. HERE is the right PLACE

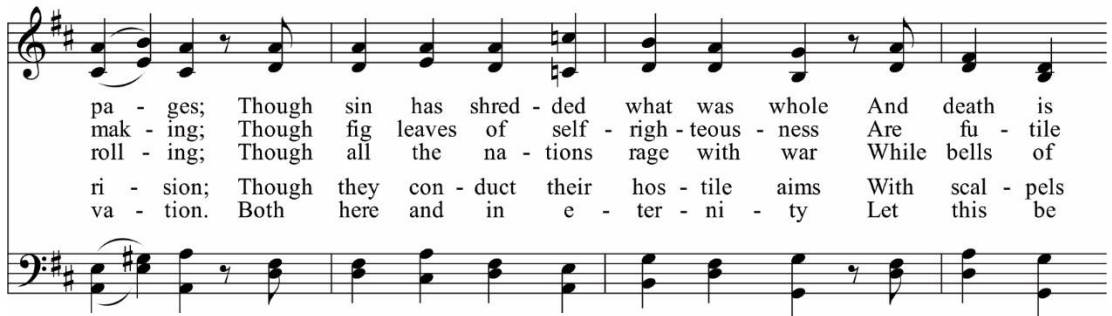
### **OFFERTORY**

*In this prayer we OFFER God our hearts, asking Him for that best of all gifts, the Holy Spirit.*

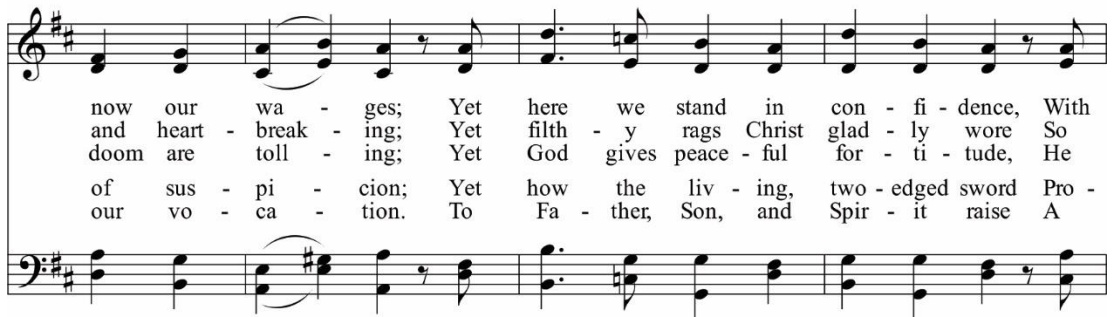
- ☐ **♪ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.**



1 Though all our life is like a scroll Un - rolled with blem - ished  
 2 Though pomp - ous - ly we try to dress In cos - tumes of our  
 3 Though earth's deep wa - ters foam and roar As surg - ing waves are  
 4 Though crit - ics cut out Scrip - ture's claims And treat them with de -  
 Δ 5 Now sing a high dox - ol - o - gy To God who gives sal -



pa - ges; Though sin has shred - ded what was whole And death is  
 mak - ing; Though fig leaves of self - righ - teous - ness Are fu - tile  
 roll - ing; Though all the na - tions rage with war While bells of  
 ri - sion; Though they con - duct their hos - tile aims With scal - pels  
 va - tion. Both here and in e - ter - ni - ty Let this be



now our wa - ges; Yet here we stand in con - fi - dence, With  
 and heart - break - ing; Yet filth - y rags Christ glad - ly wore So  
 doom are toll - ing; Yet God gives peace - ful for - ti - tude, He  
 of sus - pi - cion; Yet how the liv - ing, two - edged sword Pro -  
 our vo - ca - tion. To Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it raise A



Je - sus as our sole de - fense, For He a - lone still saves us.  
 we would per - ish nev - er - more. His grace a - lone still clothes us.  
 nur - tures us with Heav - en's food. True faith a - lone still an - chors.  
 claims the dead and ris - en Lord! God's Word a - lone: still truth - ful.  
 sym - pho - ny of grate - ful praise, For He a - lone is wor - thy.

Text: Wilfred L. Karsten

Tune: *Etlich Cristlich lider*, Nürnberg, 1524; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941

ES IST DAS HEIL

87 87 887

**- OFFERING OF THANKFUL HEARTS –**

*Followed immediately by the Offering Hymn printed below:*

**OFFERING HYMN: TLH #377:10**

**“Salvation Unto Us Has Come”**

- C** *♪* All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise To Father, Son, and Spirit  
The God that saved us by His grace, All glory to His merit!  
O Triune God in heaven above, Who hast revealed Thy saving love,  
Thy blessed name be hallowed.

**RESPONSIVE REFORMATION PRAYER**

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- P** For sending your Son to rescue the human race from sin, We thank and praise You, O Lord.
- C** For sending your Spirit to lead us to repentance and faith in Jesus as our Savior, We thank and praise You, O Lord.
- P** For teaching us that our righteous acts are filthy rags, We thank and praise You also, O Lord, for the gift of Jesus’ righteousness.
- C** For guiding women and men like Martin Luther to understand the scriptural truth, “The just shall live by faith,” We thank and praise You, O Lord.
- P** For blessing the spread of the gospel through the Reformation during these last 502 years, We thank and praise You, O Lord.
- C** For loyalty to hold to Your truth and remain Your true disciples, We ask for the power of Your Spirit, O Lord.
- P** For boldness to confess Your truth in a fallen world, We ask for the power of Your Spirit, O Lord.
- C** For zeal to spread the message of salvation in Christ alone, We ask for the power of Your Spirit, O Lord.
- P** And with grateful hearts we raise our voices to proclaim,
- C** “The just shall live by faith.” Amen.



*Sung to tune of TLH #552*

**“The Lord’s Prayer”**

- C** *♪* 1. Father in heaven, holy be Your name.  
Your kingdom come. Your will be done the same  
On earth as it is done in heav’n above.  
Our Father, bless Your children with Your love.
- 2. Our daily bread provide for us each day.  
As we forgive, so take our sins away.  
In time of tri-al, saving Lord, be near,  
From every evil our Deliverer.
- 3. Yours is the kingdom; over all things reign.  
Yours is the pow-er; all things You maintain.  
Yours is the glory, sound it forth again.  
For ever and for evermore. Amen!



## Order of Holy Communion



**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Grant us Your Spirit, gracious Father, that we may give heed to the testament of Your Son in true faith and, above all, firmly take to heart the words with which Christ gives to us His body and blood for our forgiveness. By Your grace, lead us to remember and give thanks for the boundless love which He manifested to us when, by pouring out His precious blood, He saved us from Your righteous wrath and from sin, death, and hell. Grant that we may receive the bread and wine, that is, His body and blood, as a gift, guarantee, and pledge of His salvation. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

**SANCTUS: TLH #246**

**“Holy, Holy, Holy”**

**C** **♪ Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

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**P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**



## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Lk. 22:19-20; Mt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-25

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread. And when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same way He took the cup, after supper, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

**Please Note:** The Lord's Supper is described in 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 as a most precious medicine for the soul. Like all medicines, of course, it must be used at the right time for the right purpose by the right person, lest it do more harm than good. That is one reason we ask our visitors...please speak to the pastor before you commune with us. Thank you!

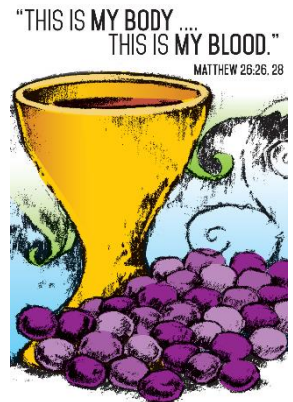
## THE DISTRIBUTION

*Approach at the usher's direction.*

- P** Take and eat. This is the true body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Take and drink. This cup is the true blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

May this body and blood strengthen and preserve you in the true faith, unto life everlasting. Depart in peace. Amen.



## THANKSGIVING: TLH #309 "O Jesus, Blessed Lord, To Thee"

- C** **♪** O Jesus, bless-ed Lord, to Thee, My heartfelt thanks forever be,  
Who hast so lovingly bestowed, On me Thy body and Thy blood.

Break forth, my soul, for joy and say, what wealth is come to me this day!  
My Savior dwells within my heart: How blest am I! How good Thou art!

## THE BENEDICTION:

*The blessing given by God for His people (Numbers 6:24-26).*

- P** The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you His peace.  
**C** Amen!

## HYMN: TLH #370

**"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"**

## ✝ Announcements ✝

**Letter Writing** We have a number of members that would like to make it to church but are unable for various reasons. Most of these members you can find on the next page in the “Shut-in/Encouragement List.” I have heard from several different people over the past few years that they greatly miss the Christian fellowship that church attendance often affords. If you know any of the individuals on the list, (or even if you do not!) please take the time over the coming weeks to reach out with Christian encouragement in the form of a letter or a phone call.

### Looking Ahead...

- ✝ **Nov. 3:** Reformation Service & Potluck Meal
- ✝ **Nov. 3:** Quarterly Voters Mtg.
- ✝ **Nov. 3:** Ladies of Immanuel
- ✝ **Nov. 10:** Orlando Service 8 am
- ✝ **Nov. 28:** Thanksgiving 10 am

**What is a Lutheran?** Many Christians today, especially in Central Florida, might not know what a Lutheran is. “Is that a cult?” “What’s the difference between that and Christian?” While we proudly bear the name “Lutheran,” that does not mean we worship Martin Luther. In 1519, “Lutheran” was a derogatory slur used against Martin Luther by the German Scholastic theologian Dr. Johann Eck during their debate in Leipzig, Germany. The Catholics followed the practice of naming a heretical group after it’s leader, and so Eck and all Catholics began using “Lutheran” as an offensive word to describe anyone who followed the teachings of Martin Luther.

What were those teachings? Simply put, they’re God’s teachings—that we are saved by God’s free **Grace Alone**; justified through **Faith Alone** apart from our works; and the basis for our hope of salvation is **Scripture Alone**. These ought to be truths eagerly proclaimed by anyone who would call themselves Christian; sadly that is not the case. Nevertheless, this is what we believe and hold fast to, not because it was taught by Luther, but because it was taught by Christ Himself.

So what is a Lutheran? A Lutheran is a Christian. A Lutheran believes strongly that all Christian teachings should come from the Bible, because it is the very Word of God. A Lutheran believes that God’s Word ought to be taken very seriously, as everything God says is correct and true. A Lutheran recognizes what God teaches us in His Word: that we are all sinners deserving damnation in hell, but that we are forgiven solely because Christ died to take away our sins. A Lutheran believes that this free gift of salvation is acquired by the individual through faith in Jesus as Savior—and that this faith only comes through the work of the Holy Spirit, as God tells us! In short, a Lutheran is a follower of Christ who depends entirely upon His grace and redeeming work, totally apart from any works, feelings, or decisions that we could attempt to contribute! ***For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast!*** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

**CLC Call News** Pastor Terrel Kesterson, Ascension, Batavia, IL has been called by Bethel, Morris, MN. <> The CLC Board of Missions has extended a call to Pastor Andrew Schaller, Calvary, Marquette, MI to serve as the CLC's third foreign missionary.

**Lutheran Spokesman Subscriptions** This announcement is coming a bit late, but your Lutheran Spokesman subscriptions were renewed at the beginning of July. The subscriptions were \$14 to renew per member, and if you would like to contribute to help offset this cost, simply make a note of your intentions on your offering envelopes. This is a freewill offering; the subscriptions have already been renewed and will continue coming until June regardless.

**Shut-in/Encouragement List** **Emily Kuehne** suffers from total blindness and severe knee pain when standing or walking. **Patti Meno** continues to receive treatment for her kidney condition and is awaiting a transplant. **Bill Issitt III** remains mostly housebound while recovering from several health problems. **Johanna Jaehnigen** remains mostly housebound, being no longer able to drive. **Crystal Shaw** has many blood clots in her heart, lungs, and legs, and is receiving treatment to prevent a heart attack. **Bill Hartmann's** health is deteriorating. Please keep Bill and Liz in your prayers. **Bill Issitt Sr.** is still recovering from his hospital stay, but we praise the Lord for great progress so far. **Loye Issitt** is receiving regular dialysis and had an operation this past week.

**Last Week (10/27)** WH – 33 Orlando – 19

General = \$1965 | Spokesman = \$20 | ILC Scholarship = \$10 | Building = \$20 | Tuition = \$1875  
Benevolence = \$25 | CLC Missions = \$100 **Total Offering = \$4,015**

**November Usher:** Darrin Ream | **Cleaning (11/9):** Ireland | **Acolyte (11/10):** Mason G.

### **“STAND FIRM IN CHRIST ALONE”**

*Excerpts from a Reformation sermon on Colossians 1:21-23 by Pastor Michael Eichstadt, Messiah, Hales Corners, WI, CLC President | Originally delivered **October 29, 2017***

In just a few days it will be October 31, 2017, 500 years to the day when Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. With that seemingly insignificant act, God set in motion what we know as the Reformation. Throughout this year we have been noting the many blessings received through the Reformation, especially the greatest of all gifts, the news that Jesus is the Savior who once and for all has made peace between the world and God.

But what about the future? If Jesus has not returned before then, what will Reformation Day be like 500 years from now on October 31, 2517? ...Will people 500 year in the future still remember the Reformation? Will they still thank God for it?

Reason would say, “Probably not.” By nature we quickly tire of the old and look for something new. ...Even many who call themselves Lutheran today, argue that Reformation-era Lutheranism is showing its age and needs to be updated and rebranded for our Facebook age. “After all,” they might argue, “isn’t that what Luther pushed for—change? Didn’t he challenge the status quo?”

Luther did, of course, preach change, but not change for the sake of novelty or keeping up with the times. He urged “reform,” that is, the correcting of false teachings in the Catholic Church and a return to the truths God reveals in His Word. That’s evident from what took place about 3 ½ years after the posting of the 95 Theses. Luther was summoned to the city of Worms, Germany to appear before the emperor and other high-ranking officials of church and state. When asked whether he would recant, Luther replied: “Unless I

am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen." Luther did just what the Apostle Paul urges in our text. He stood firm on the truth of the Word. He didn't budge from there for the rest of his life. By God's grace that is where the Lord calls us to stand as well...

The reformation was not complete when Luther died in 1546. It is still not finished. As long as the sinful earth stands, there will be an ongoing need to recognize the deadly nature of sin and error and to keep coming back to the truth of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, revealed in Scripture alone.

Standing firm is a lifelong activity for the believer. The Lord doesn't say, "Stand firm until you are confirmed," or "Stand firm until you leave for college or get married." He says, "**He who stands firm to the end will be saved.**" (Matthew 24:13) It is heartbreaking when children fall from faith after confirmation or when a once steadfast fellow believer turns away from Christ because of the influence of professors, friends, or the world in general.

Paul's message is urgent: "**Continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, not moved from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was proclaimed to every creature under heaven.**" It is not just a danger for someone else. The devil is still the roaring lion restlessly on the prowl for an opportunity to pounce and destroy faith. We are no stronger by nature than others who have fallen, so what hope do we have? How can we fortify our children for life in a world growing more hostile to Christianity? The Lord doesn't leave us defenseless. Look at Luther. He stood firm, not because of his own strength of will, but by faith. "**Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.**" (Romans 10:17) Luther immersed himself in the Word and through it the Lord renewed his trust, courage, and determination to stand firm.

Today we are incredibly blessed to have the Word in a variety of excellent translations available at a cost that few of us would see as an obstacle. We can access it on our phones and computers. We have pastors whom we can rely on for insights into the original Hebrew and Greek of Scripture. We have leisure time in which to read our Bibles.

But do we? From what I have heard, Lutherans in general spent more time gathered around the Word as congregations 100 years ago than we typically do today. And what about the Word in our homes? Do you spend more or less time today reading the Word and talking about it in family devotions than you did ten or twenty years ago? Our faith and stand on Christ will inevitably weaken if we don't read and study the Word. Our families will not remain true to the Lord if we fail to lead them daily to the Savior. Our church body will go the way of so many others if we do not use the Word, train pastors and teachers to proclaim it, and build one another up with it.

A "reformation" we need today is to repent of our neglect of the Word, go to the cross for forgiveness, and pray for the Spirit's encouragement to rededicate ourselves to reading and hearing the only message which saves. For if we continue in the Word, we will stand firm. God Himself will see to it. Paul urges: "**Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ...Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand**" (Ephesians 6:10ff.)

500 years ago Martin Luther stood firm on Christ and the truth of His Word. Because he did, the gospel has been passed down through the generations to us today. By God's grace, we stand today where Luther stood. May the Lord through His Word preserve us, that we may continue to stand firm and steadfast, and eagerly proclaim the good news as long as the Lord leaves us here. Then we can be sure that 500 years from now there will still be people remembering the Reformation and saying, "Here we stand too!" Amen.