

## Oct 25 2020 Reformation Sunday for Worship at Home

We welcome Captain, The Rev. Michael Hackbusch as our guest preacher this morning. Michael was a young teen living here in the parsonage with his family when his father was your Pastor - Rev. Ed Hackbusch from 1972 to 1979.

We are using the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons.

Shut off all the distractions in your home. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

### The Gathering

**Greeting:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Hymn: ELW 503 LBW 228 - A Mighty Fortress is Our God**

**Holy is the Lord, the Almighty.** He was, he is, and he is to come.

He is worthy of glory and honor and power. He created all things. By his will they came to be. Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain; worthy to take the scroll and break its seals. By his blood he purchased for God people of every race and tongue, of every folk and nation. Christ made of them a kingdom and priests to serve our God. And they shall reign on earth forever. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

### The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**The Lord be with you** ~ and also with you.

**Let us pray:** 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

### **The Word**

The Old Testament lesson is from Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalms 46 is found on page 236.

The New Testament lesson is from Romans 3:19-28

Please rise for the gospel lesson.

**Alleluia, Lord whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

Gospel: John 8: 31-36

Sermon for this service is by Rev. Norine Gullons

Think of some of the reforming transitions the Lutheran church has been through in the last 50 years. Hymn books, forms of worship, multiple means of music, the ordination of women, new ELCIC and ELCA churches, Bishops, full communion with Anglicans and sharing worship with others.

Reformation Sunday is about *re-forming* but it is mostly about freedom.

Jesus says that we are no longer second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God. He knows people are going to have a hard time believing that someone can move you from being a slave to being free. That can only be done by the King or the heir of the King. And that's what Jesus does because that's who Jesus is. He is the heir, the one who can pronounce freedom. The one who can invite people to leave their chains behind and claim the abundant life and freedom God offers. That is the truth that makes you free: that God has *already* made you free and called you a beloved child. Re-forming is about freedom!

Jeremiah reminds us that it is the past that traps us, you see. The past that reminds us of all our shortcomings and failures and disappointments. And God tells Israel through Jeremiah that even though Israel forgot their identity and fell short in a hundred different ways, yet God would not hold this against Israel. That God will – indeed, already has – willfully forgotten all their sin. And here's the thing: no memory of the past, no memory of sin, and the future is open. They were free to be! *You are free to be!*

Paul's declaration was important, that we have all been justified by grace.

Luther's hammering his theses against the Wittenburg Church door, remind us that grace reigns supreme. The whole Reformation-thing was intended to tell us that, in the end, we don't need to do anything, earn anything, say anything, accomplish anything, or buy anything to earn God's love. *We already have it!*

Most of the Church's problems – and, indeed, the world's problems – start when

we forget we already have love and worth and dignity as a gift from God and we try to earn it or take it from someone else.

From time to time, we might wonder what the biblical readings have to do with our lives today, and we might wonder if the words and deeds of the Reformers 500 years ago matter, but it's finally all about freedom. We are not trapped. No matter what we may have done, no matter what may have been done to us. None of these things define us. We are free and the future is open.

I know that can be really, really hard to believe. Some of what's happened to us seems so huge, so important, so all-encompassing, but it's not. Not to say that these things don't matter. They do. Illness, disappointment, hurt, whatever. They matter and they may, in fact, be *descriptively* true of us. But they do not *define* us. Nothing we have done or has been done to us captures who we are completely. Only one thing can do that: God, the creator and sustainer of all. And God has chosen to call us beloved children, holy and precious in His sight. That's what defines us!

And so we are free. Free to risk and serve and help and care and try and struggle and laugh and all the rest. We are free, that is, to love, just as God loves us. We are free to be what God has called us to be. Amen.

### **Hymn ELW 793 - Be thou My Vision**

#### **Our Response**

##### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Prayers of the people are led by Maureen Rueckwald**

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

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. Ignite in us the working of the Holy Spirit. 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, especially in our own land. 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 ill. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this family of faith 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 our ancestors who have shown us 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 peace of Christ be with you always . . . . . and also with you.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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.

### **Hymn ELW 654 LBW 369 - The Church's One Foundation**

#### **Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord's make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you,  
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

**Dismissal** Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**