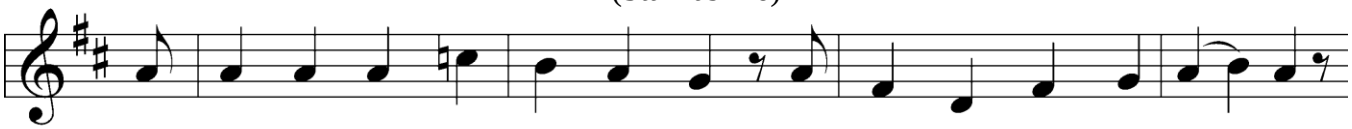
Home Worship Service for

The Festival of the Reformation
October 25, 2026

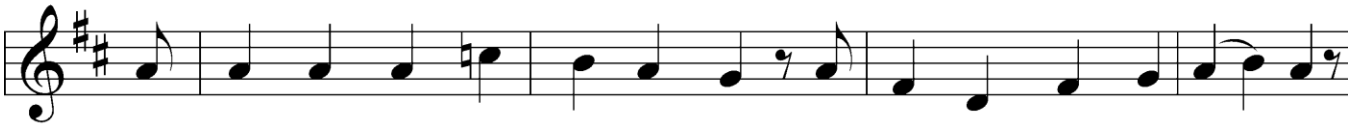
(Transferred from October 31)

Salvation unto Us Has Come

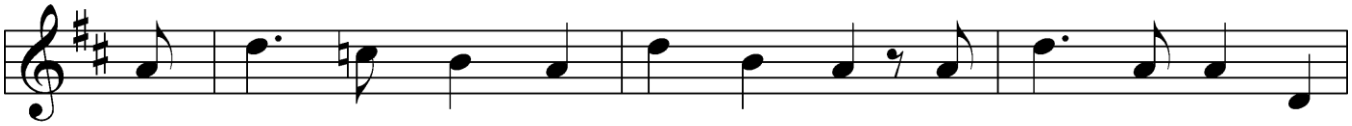
Lutheran Service Book 555, Lutheran Worship 355, The Lutheran Hymnal 377
(Stanzas 1-6)



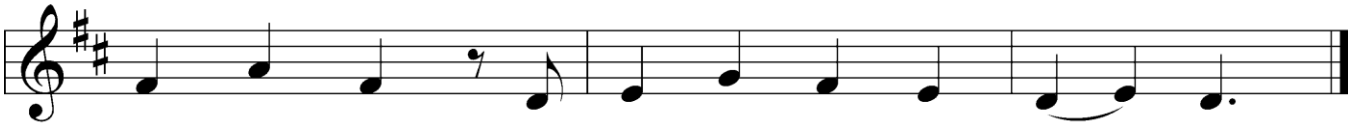
1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come By God's free grace and fa - vor;
2 What God did in His Law de - mand And none to Him could ren - der
3 It was a false, mis - lead - ing dream That God His Law had giv - en
4 From sin our flesh could not ab - stain, Sin held its sway un - ceas-ing;



Good works can - not a - vert our doom, They help and save us nev - er.
Caused wrath and woe on ev - 'ry hand For man, the vile of - fend - er.
That sin - ners could them-selves re - deem And by their works gain heav - en.
The task was use - less and in vain, Our guilt was e'er in - creas-ing.



Faith looks to Je - sus Christ a - lone, Who did for all the
Our flesh has not those pure de - sires The spir - it of the
The Law is but a mir - ror bright To bring the in - bred
None can re - move sin's poi - soned dart Or pu - ri - fy our



world a - tone; He is our one Re - deem - er.
Law re - quires, And lost is our con - di - tion.
sin to light That lurks with - in our na - ture.
guile - ful heart— So deep is our cor - rup - tion.

5 Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and has God's anger stilled,
Our human nature sharing.
He has for us the Law obeyed
And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
Which over us impended.

6 Since Christ has full atonement made
And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad
And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
Your death is now my life indeed,
For You have paid my ransom.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.** *(Psalm 124:8)*
L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.
C **Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me**. *(Psalm 19:12, 13)*
L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?
C **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** *(Psalm 130:3–4)*
L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:
C **God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.** *(Luke 18:13)*
L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
C **Amen.**

Introit Psalm 34:1, 2, 11, 22; antiphon Psalm 119:46

L I will speak of your testimonies before kings, [O Lord,]
and shall not be put to shame.
C **I will bless the Lord at all times;**
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
L My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
C **Come, O children, listen to me;**
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
L The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.
C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
L I will speak of your testimonies before kings, [O Lord,]
and shall not be put to shame.

Kyrie

L O Lord, C **Have mercy on us.**
L O Christ, C **Have mercy on us.**
L O Lord, C **Have mercy on us.**

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
C **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**
L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
C **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C **For You alone are the Holy One,**
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Revelation 14:6–7

6Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on
earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give
him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea
and the springs of water."

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Psalm 48:1, 12-14

L Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God!
C **Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,**
consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels,
L that you may tell the next generation
C **that this is God, our God forever and ever.**

Psalm 46

L 1God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
C **2Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,**
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
L 3though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
C **4There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**
L 5God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.
C **6The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.**
L 7The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
C **8Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.**
L 9He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
C **10"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,**
I will be exalted in the earth!"
L 11The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Romans 3:19–28

[19]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. [20]For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

[21]But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— [22]the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24]and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25]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. [26]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.

[27]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. [28]For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

John 8:31–36

L The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 8th chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[31]So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32]and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [33]They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

[34]Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. [35]The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. [36]So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

The Apostles' Creed

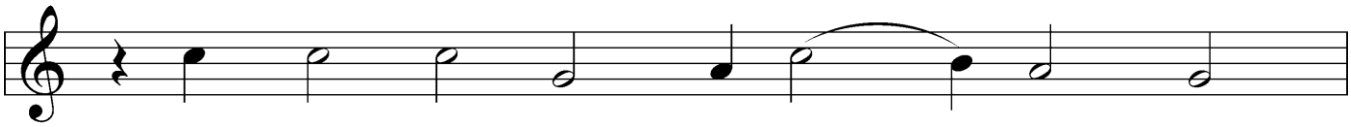
C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

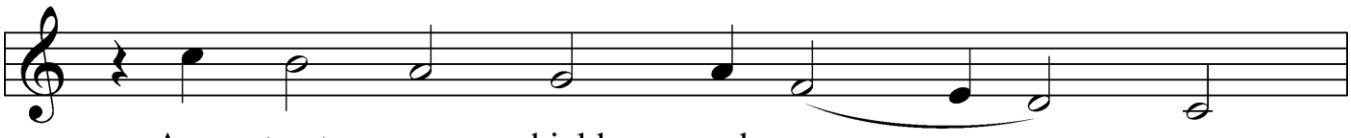
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

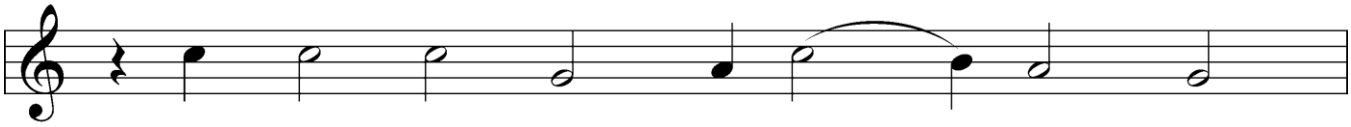
Lutheran Service Book 656, Lutheran Worship 298, The Lutheran Hymnal 262



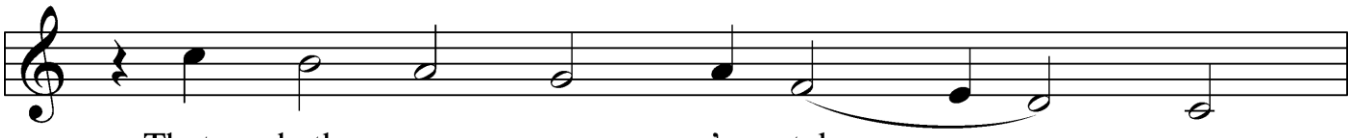
1 A might - y for - tress is our God,
2 With might of ours can naught be done,
3 Though dev - ils all the world should fill,
4 The Word they still shall let re - main



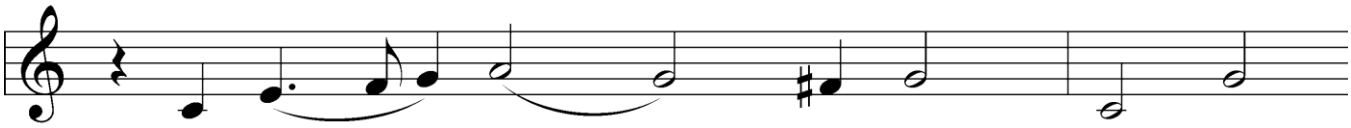
A trust - y shield and weap - on;
Soon were our loss ef - fect - ed;
All ea - ger to de - vour us,
Nor an - y thanks have for it;



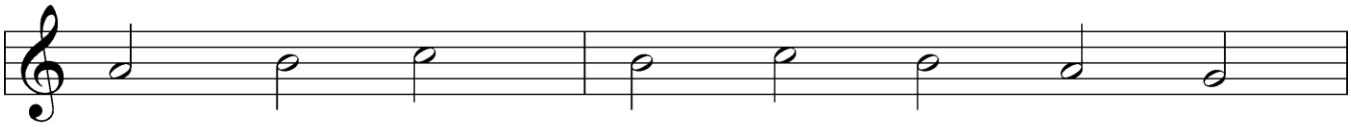
He helps us free from ev - 'ry need
But for us fights the val - iant One,
We trem - ble not, we fear no ill;
He's by our side up - on the plain



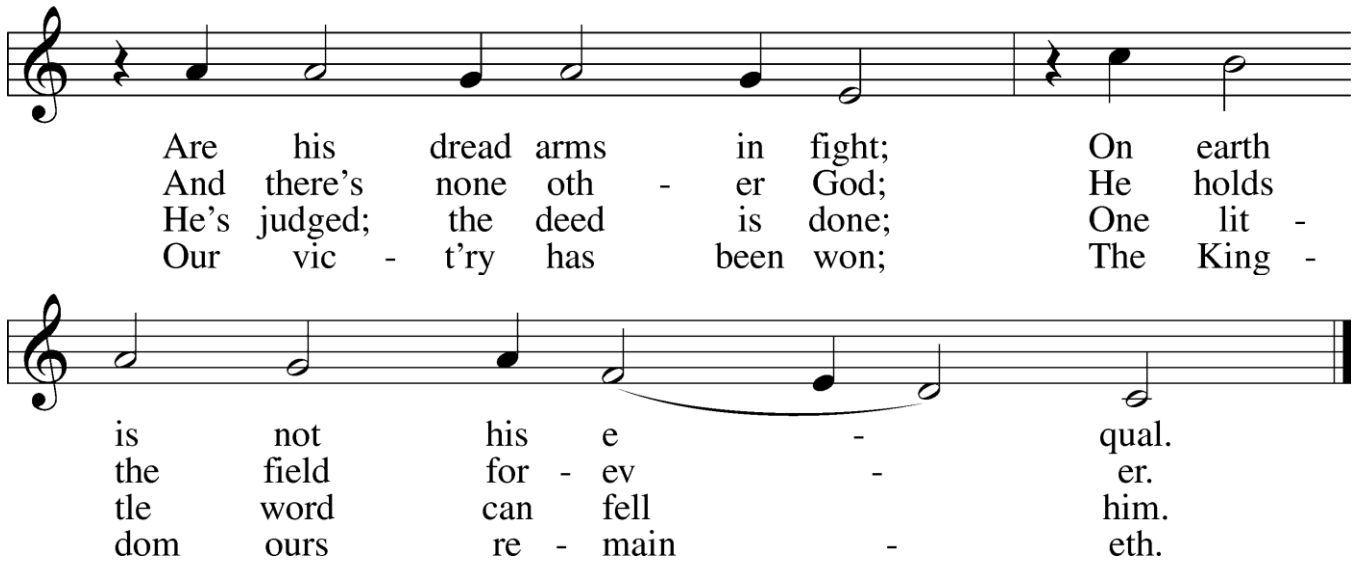
That hath us now o'er - tak - en.
Whom God Him - self e - lect - ed.
They shall not o - ver - pow'r us.
With His good gifts and Spir - it.



The old e - vil foe Now means
Ask ye, Who is this? Je - sus
This world's prince may still Scowl fierce
And take they our life, Goods, fame,



dead - ly woe; Deep guile and great might
Christ it is, Of Sab - a - oth Lord,
as he will, He can harm us none.
child, and wife, Though these all be gone,



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Devotional thoughts:

I'm guessing that you've never heard of Oliver Harms, to be more specific Oliver Raymond Harms. He served as the seventh president of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) from 1962 to 1969. It seems curious even to me that I remember him.

I was baptized at Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Joseph, attended there, and went to Sunday school there. Next, we joined Trinity Lutheran Church in Sawyer and I attended Trinity Lutheran School there. In my young mind, the only acceptable churches were named Trinity Lutheran! This all changed in 1962 or '63.

For several weeks in school, we learned to sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" in parts. As I recall, I had never been taught harmony before. I soon learned that this was all in preparation for singing in a mass children's choir at the Reformation Rally being held in the gymnasium at Lakeshore High School in Stevensville.

The day of the Reformation Rally came. When we walked into the gymnasium, I was startled. The entire venue was filled to capacity. Not only were the bleachers full, but chairs also occupied the entire floor area.

We were taken to our places in the mass children's choir. I saw that there also was also a mass choir of adults. This was going to be one spectacular worship service.

The guest speaker was Rev. Oliver Harms, president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. On that day, I learned that there was more to the Lutheran Church than the two congregations named Trinity.

Nine years ago, I had the privilege of attending a Reformation Rally at the Breslin Center at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. This was a spectacular event honoring the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Thousands of people filled this huge arena. There were mass choirs and bands. It was an event that many years from now will still be remembered by the children in the choir! Still, I am not sure that it will be more memorable to them than the Reformation Rally at Lakeshore High School was for me.

Why is the Reformation worth remembering on such a grand scale? The secular world sees the Reformation as the beginning of the separation of church and state. They applaud the emphasis on an individual standing up against authority. They miss the point.

The Reformation is worth celebrating because in it, Martin Luther was used by God to restore the truth of God's word and His plan of salvation to the Church. Prior to the Reformation, the Gospel of forgiveness given freely for Christ's sake had been lost. This burdened countless souls who trembled in fear as they faced eternity. Martin Luther felt this burden intensely. The more he tried to be perfect, the more he recognized his imperfections. He wondered, "How could a holy God accept a sinner like me?" How could he ever obtain the righteousness demanded by God? He wrote, "I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn't be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction. I did not love, no, rather I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners."

Martin Luther found the solution to his dilemma in the Bible. As he meditated on Romans chapter one particularly verse 17, "The righteous shall live by faith," he was led to the rediscovery of the Gospel. He wrote, "I began to understand that this verse means that the righteousness of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive righteousness, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The righteous person lives by faith." All at once, I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God."

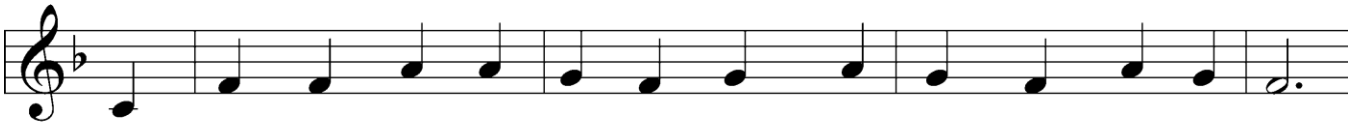
While we mark the Reformation from the date of Luther posting the 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, it is this rediscovery of the Gospel that gave the Reformation its power and lasting impact. This is the truth of God's word that set him free. This is the truth of God's word that makes us free indeed! With Luther and the rest of mankind, we were slaves to sin, but God's own Son has set us free from sin, death, and the devil. There is no greater truth to celebrate.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

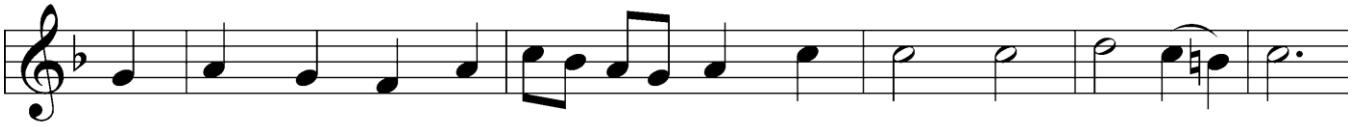
God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

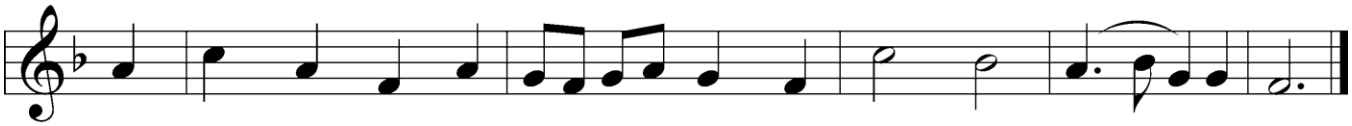
Lutheran Service Book 549, Lutheran Worship 272, The Lutheran Hymnal 339



1 All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pros-trate fall;
2 Crown Him, ye mar - tyrs of our God, Who from His al - tar call;
3 Ye seed of Is - rael's cho - sen race, Ye ran - somed from the fall,
4 Hail Him, ye heirs of Da - vid's line, Whom Da - vid Lord did call,
5 Sin - ners, whose love can ne'er for - get The worm-wood and the gall,



Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem And crown Him Lord of all.
Ex - tol the stem of Jes - se's rod And crown Him Lord of all.
Hail Him who saves you by His grace And crown Him Lord of all.
The God in - car - nate, man di - vine, And crown Him Lord of all.
Go, spread your tro - phies at His feet And crown Him Lord of all.



Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem And crown Him Lord of all.
Ex - tol the stem of Jes - se's rod And crown Him Lord of all.
Hail Him who saves you by His grace And crown Him Lord of all.
The God in - car - nate, man di - vine, And crown Him Lord of all.
Go, spread your tro - phies at His feet And crown Him Lord of all.

6 Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe,
On this terrestrial ball
To Him all majesty ascribe
And crown Him Lord of all.
To Him all majesty ascribe
And crown Him Lord of all.

7 Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all.

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Prayers

L Lord, our Mighty Fortress and Rock of refuge, sustain Your people in every time of need. Deliver us from error and preserve the proclamation of Your Gospel, that it will resound to every nation, tribe, people and language and that all may fear, love, and trust in You above all things.
C **Amen.**

L Lord, our Mighty Fortress and Rock of refuge, bless all ministers of Your Word. Help them rightly to preach Your holy Word of the Law so that all are held accountable to You without excuse. Inspire them to joyfully proclaim Your holy Word of the Gospel, that all would know gift of life and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior.
C **Amen.**

L Lord, our Mighty Fortress and Rock of refuge, look with compassion on all who are blind to the bondage of their sin. Open their eyes by the words of Jesus, and grant them the true freedom of sonship and a permanent place in Your household.
C **Amen.**

L Lord, our Mighty Fortress and Rock of refuge, make us truly Your disciples. Keep us in Your Word, free us from all errors, and make our homes and families peaceful. Preserve all parents and encourage them for their godly task, that children would be brought up in the nurture and adomonition of the Lord.
C **Amen.**

L Lord, guide and give wisdom and integrity to our nation and its leaders, and to all judges and magistrates that we might live in peace with a good conscience. Grant that they would make salutary use of the taxes we render, and lead us to recognize them as Your instruments, honoring them as You command. Protect those who serve us as firefighters, police, disaster workers and medical personnel. Protect those in harm's way because of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.
C **Amen.**

L Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace sufficient for their needs according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.
C **Amen.**

L Preserve Your Church, O Lord, and each of us as members of Christ's Body, that we may never surrender the true Gospel for any reason, but be kept in the true faith throughout the days of our earthly pilgrimage, until we all stand before Christ to receive the inheritance that You have prepared for us and all who have trusted in Him for salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

C **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.**

L Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C **Amen**

Salvation unto Us Has Come

Lutheran Service Book 555, Lutheran Worship 355, The Lutheran Hymnal 377
(Stanzas 7-10)

7 Let me not doubt, but truly see
Your Word cannot be broken;
Your call rings out, "Come unto Me!"
No falsehood have You spoken.
Baptized into Your precious name,
My faith cannot be put to shame,
And I shall never perish.

8 The Law reveals the guilt of sin
And makes us conscience-stricken;
But then the Gospel enters in
The sinful soul to quicken.
Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live;
The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.

9 Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone
And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known,
With love and hope increasing.
For faith alone can justify;
Works serve our neighbor and supply
The proof that faith is living.

10 All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace;
All glory to His merit.
O triune God in heav'n above,
You have revealed Your saving love;
Your blessèd name we hallow.

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship
Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Week of
Reformation Sunday
October 26—31, 2026

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Introit Psalm 34:1, 2, 11, 22; antiphon Psalm 119:46

L I will speak of your testimonies before kings, [O Lord,]
and shall not be put to shame.
C **I will bless the Lord at all times;**
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
L My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
C **Come, O children, listen to me;**
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
L The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.
C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
L I will speak of your testimonies before kings, [O Lord,]
and shall not be put to shame.
L The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

Kyrie

L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Christ, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**

The lessons and propers for this week are all chosen because of their long-standing association with Martin Luther and the Reformation. Psalm 119:46, "I will speak of your testimonies before kings" that begins and ends the introit has long been thought to aptly describe Martin Luther as he stood before the emperor at the Diet (congress) of Worms in 1521. It also describes the presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 when Christian Beyer stood before the same emperor and read our Lutheran statement of faith.

Have you ever experienced stage fright? Many of us have. Yet this stage fright is nothing compared to the danger faced by Luther and the Lutheran confessors. They stood there in peril for their lives. Following the Diet of Worms, Luther was declared an outlaw. Anyone who would shelter or help him would also be considered outlaws. So why did Luther make the bold statement, "Here I stand"? He knew that his salvation depended on Christ alone and no threat from church or state could ever cause him to give up his faith.

He concluded his remarks at Worms with these words: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other. May God help me. Amen."

L Let us pray. Almighty God, thank You that we are heirs of the Reformation truth that we are saved by grace through faith for Christ's sake. Grant that we may always abide in the word, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
C **Amen.**

Tuesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Kyrie

L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Christ, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray. Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

An ongoing challenge for children of the Reformation is to remain steadfast in God's grace and truth. The devil, the world, and our own sinful nature are always tempting us to abandon God's word and to find comfort in our own wisdom and understanding. In times past, the Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ was threatened by authorities of both church and state. Today, it is threatened by the fear of ridicule or discrimination with friends or in our places of employment. We pray in the collect that the Holy Spirit would keep us faithful in a world filled with enemies of the Gospel.

May we ever be faithful to the three solas of the Reformation. We are saved by FAITH ALONE, not by our works of righteousness. This salvation comes to us purely by GRACE ALONE. We can claim no credit. It was won for us by Christ on the cross and given to us freely. This is all revealed to us in SCRIPTURE ALONE. We never rely on human tradition or wisdom. We only trust what God has told us to be true in His holy word.

Prayer: Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Psalm 46

L [1]God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
C **[2]Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,**
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
L [3]though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
C **[4]There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**
L [5]God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.
C **[6]The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.**
L [7]The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
C **[8]Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.**
L [9]He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
C **[10]"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,**
I will be exalted in the earth!"
L [11]The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 46 was Martin Luther's inspiration for his world-renowned hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." There were many times when Luther had reason to turn to this psalm. We mostly focus on his ongoing struggle with church and secular authorities. But Luther also faced other physical and mental challenges.

He ministered in Wittenberg during the plague. His thoughts on this were often shared during the pandemic.

God granted him a wonderful wife in Katherine Von Bora and a happy marriage. But two of his children died. One was just a few months old and the other was his thirteen-year-old daughter who died in his arms.

Yes, Luther experienced many troubles in life and found comfort in God's word.

We, too, experience a life filled with troubles and sorrow. We each have our own burdens to bear. Nevertheless, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The sinful world may present us with challenges, yet we need not fear though the earth gives way.

All around us, nations and politicians may rage but the Lord of hosts is with us! He is our fortress. In all these times of trouble, we can be still and calm knowing that God is on our side. He gave His only Son for us. His love is complete. He will care for us at all times and in all places until we join Him for all eternity.

Prayer: Almighty God, we live in troubled times. We experience trouble in our lives. Grant that in all this trouble we would turn to you in faith trusting in Your divine presence and protection for time and eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Revelation 14:6–7

[6]Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. [7]And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

The word angel means messenger. Through the years, many have associated this angel of Revelation 14:6 with Martin Luther. They saw him as the messenger that restored the eternal gospel to the church. While Martin Luther does fit Revelation 14:6-7, so does every pastor and teacher who clearly proclaims the eternal gospel. Every mother who teaches her children about Jesus fits these words. Every father who leads his family in daily devotions fits these words. Every time you tell someone of Jesus and his love for sinners, these words apply to you.

The eternal gospel is this: God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Prayer: O Lord, God, thank you for all messengers who bring Your eternal gospel to the people of the world. Grant that we may actively participate in bringing the message of salvation to every nation and tribe and language and people, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Kyrie

L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Christ, C **Have Mercy on us.**
L O Lord, C **Have Mercy on us.**

Romans 3:19–28

[19]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. [20]For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

[21]But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— [22]the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24]and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25]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. [26]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.

[27]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. [28]For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

If you ever wanted to sum up Lutheran theology, these words from Romans are a perfect fit. All religions of the world emphasize what you do for your own salvation. True Christian theology agrees with St. Paul and these words from Romans. Everything necessary for our salvation has been done for us by God in Christ Jesus. "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

The Reformation can be explained in these words: "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."

Prayer: O Lord, we all fall short of Your glory, but You still love us and sent Jesus to grant us life and salvation. Thank you for this extravagant gift. Amen.

Saturday

Reformation Day
October 31, 2023

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Luke 12:32

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Alleluia.**

Gradual Psalm 48:1, 12-14

L Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God!
C **Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,**
consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels,
L that you may tell the next generation
C **that this is God, our God forever and ever.**

Kyrie

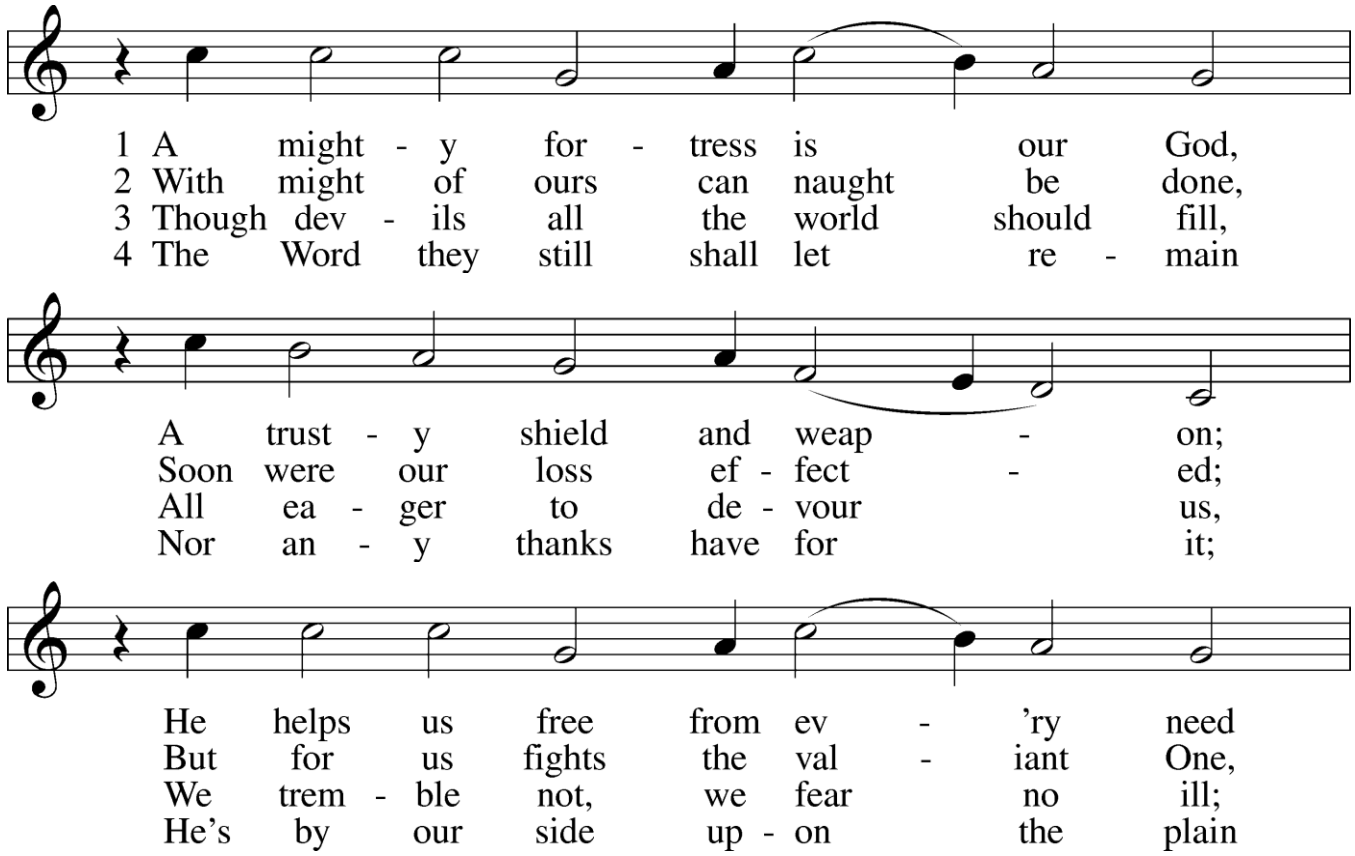
L	O Lord,	C	**Have Mercy on us.**
L	O Christ,	C	**Have Mercy on us.**
L	O Lord,	C	**Have Mercy on us.**

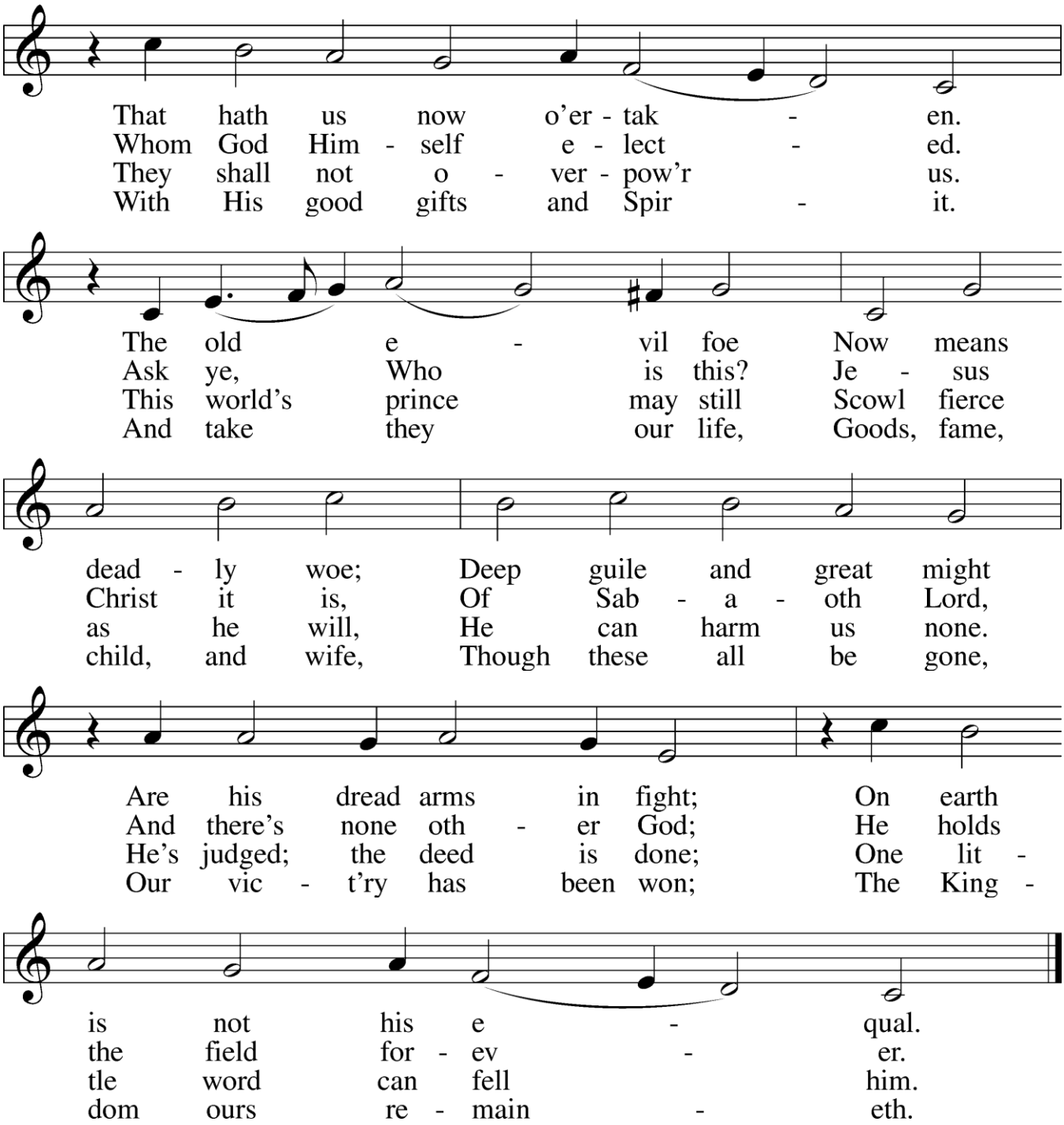
Romans 1:16-17

[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Lutheran Service Book 656, Lutheran Worship 298, The Lutheran Hymnal 262





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Christmas and Thanksgiving are the only non-Sunday movable holidays that we have the privilege of celebrating on the day. Other than those two, people in our culture do not attend worship services on the actual date of holidays. This is why Reformation Day is usually observed on the last Sunday of October and All Saints' Day is usually observed on the first Sunday of November, although in fact, they fall on October 31 and November 1.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. This year it gives us an entire week to celebrate the Reformation.

I suspect the average "Lutheran on the street" knows that the Reformation involves Martin Luther nailing 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg and that we sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

If in singing "A Mighty Fortress," we were to pay attention to the words, we would learn important truths of the Reformation.

A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

God cares for us in every need. We have many of them. Without God on our side, the devil, the old evil foe, could never be defeated. He is too clever and powerful for us. Nothing on earth is a match for him.

With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.

When we try to stand alone against the devil, we will surely fall in battle. The situation is hopeless.

But all is not lost. The valiant One fights for us! If you don't know who this is, let me tell you. It is Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of the armies of heaven (Sabaoth). In fact, He is God! In the field of battle against the devil, He will always prevail.

Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

Indeed, it feels like the whole world is against us. Evil is ready to swallow us, but we have no fear. Yes, the devil may prowl around like a roaring lion, scowling at us with a most miserable face. But he's a caged beast. There is no way he can hurt us. The cross and resurrection put an end to him. One word causes his defeat. [Which is that word? Some say that it is "Jesus" which is certainly a good answer. Others believe it to be a word from the cross, "It is finished" which in Greek is a single word. Whenever the devil speaks in your ear to convince you that you are not worthy of heaven and that you need to do more to earn your salvation, simply respond with Jesus' words, "It is finished!"]

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.

And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

In John chapter 1, we learn that Jesus, God's only-begotten Son, is the Word. There is nothing that can defeat Him. He stands next to you on the field of battle and gives to you His gifts and the Holy Spirit. Nothing can defeat you. It is possible to lose all our earthly blessings as countless martyrs have before. Nevertheless, we will remain forever in God eternal Kingdom singing God's praises with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for giving us the eternal Gospel of salvation by grace through faith for Christ's sake. Grant that we may remain forever faithful to You and Your word and so be made truly free indeed receiving the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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