

The Festival of the Reformation

October 26, 2025

Transferred from October 31

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,

Are his dread arms in fight; On earth
 And there's none oth - er God; He holds
 He's judged; the deed is done; One lit -
 Our vic - t'ry has been won; The King -

is not his e - qual.
 the field for - ev - er.
 tle word can fell him.
 dom ours re - main eth.

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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;
- C** the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Romans 3:19–28

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

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

²⁷Then 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. ²⁸For 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.

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

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

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G 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

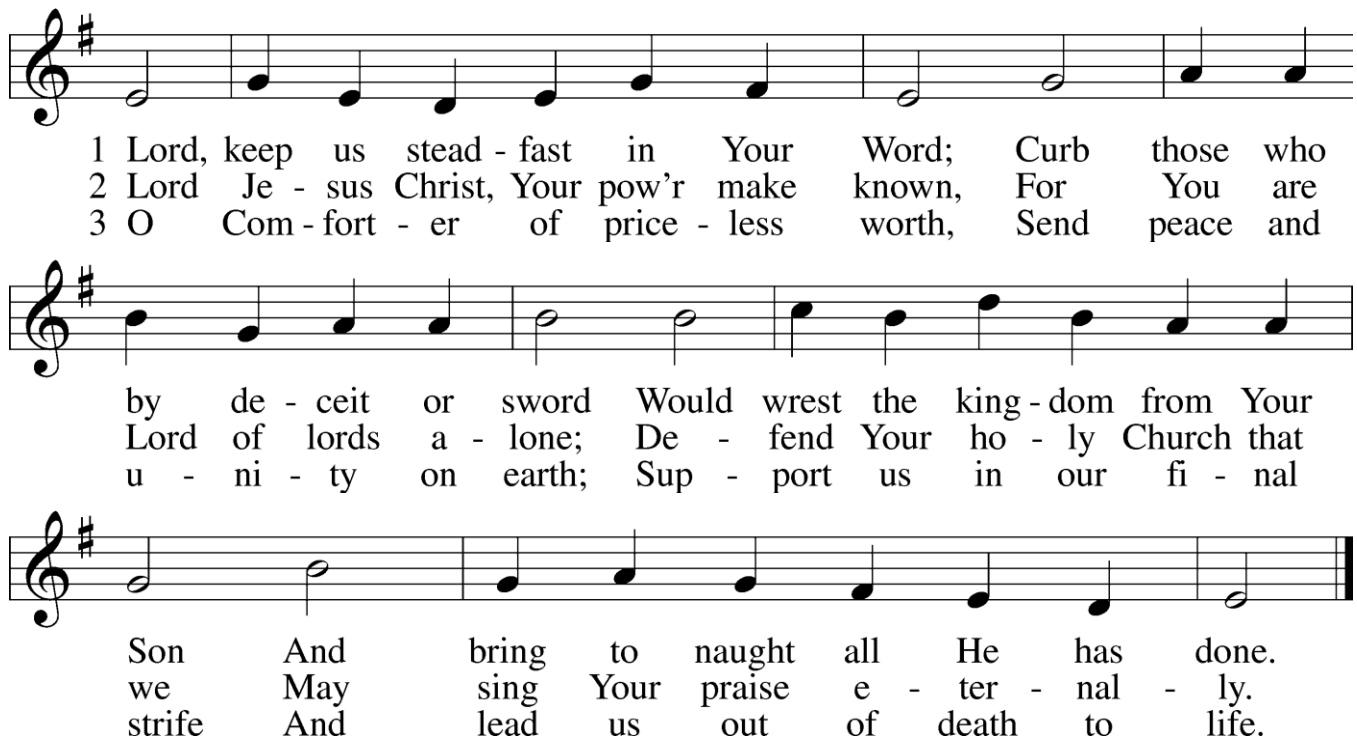
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

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

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lutheran Service Book 655, Lutheran Worship 334, The Lutheran Hymnal 261



1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in Your Word; Curb those who
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, Your pow'r make known, For You are
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, Send peace and

by de - ceit or sword Would wrest the king - dom from Your
Lord of lords a - lone; De - fend Your ho - ly Church that
u - ni - ty on earth; Sup - port us in our fi - nal

Son And bring to naught all He has done.
we May sing Your praise e - ter - nal - ly.
strife And lead us out of death to life.

Devotional thoughts:

Have you noticed that extraordinary things often begin in innocent and ordinary ways?

That happened to me one day while I was attending Trinity Lutheran School in Sawyer, Michigan. Dr. Paul Zimmerman, president of Concordia Lutheran Junior College in Ann Arbor, came for a visit. He showed us slides of the brand-new college and ended his presentation by saying, “One day, maybe you will attend Concordia.” I never forgot those words.

I did attend Concordia and there I met my future wife. I learned Greek and began my studies for the holy ministry. And as they say, “The rest is history.”

I don’t know what I had for breakfast that day. I don’t know what I did after school. But that day changed my life. Perhaps something like that happened to you when one small thing changed your life.

Something similar happened to Martin Luther one day in 1517. We don’t know what day it was. We don’t know what he ate for breakfast or what his schedule looked like. No, it wasn’t October 31, the day we observe as Reformation Day. It was a day earlier in the year that ultimately changed history.

On that day, Luther encountered one of his parishioners, who had recently traveled to a nearby town. There, this unknown traveler purchased one of John Tetzel’s indulgences. He told Luther that he no longer needed to repent and change his life for his sins to be forgiven because he had purchased an indulgence! And as they say, “The rest is history.”

Luther began to preach sermons on the dangers of indulgences. He taught that true repentance was better than purchasing an indulgence. Finally, he composed his Ninety-Five Theses on The Power and Efficacy of Indulgences. He nailed them on the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Copies were printed and distributed among his friends and opponents. And the world changed!

The commotion that followed caused Luther to dig more and more deeply into Holy Scripture. As a result of his searching, Luther reports, “Finally, God had mercy on me, and I began to understand that the righteousness of God is a gift of God by which a righteous man lives, namely faith, and that sentence: The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel, is passive, indicating that the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ Now I felt as though I had been reborn altogether and had entered Paradise.” His rediscovery of the Gospel would govern all of his activities for the rest of his life.

Luther’s teaching of the Gospel caused an uproar at the highest levels of church and state. He was summoned to the Diet of Worms to appear before Emperor Charles V who was the most powerful man in Europe. We know him as the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire but he was also king of Spain. Luther was instructed to renounce the Gospel under the threat of death. At the end of this meeting, he spoke these famous 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.”

And as they say, “The rest is history!”

One day, long before Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, an unknown man was practicing his craft. We don’t know what he had for breakfast or how his day was planned but what he produced would be remembered to this very day. His creation would one day become a bed for a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. That seemingly ordinary occurrence was witnessed by only a few shepherds but it put into motion events that would change the world. It would change eternity. For in that manger was the very Son of God who would set us free! And as they say, “The rest is history.”

His life and death set us free from indulgences. It set us free from sin. It set us free from death and the power of the devil.

We are free indeed! But our human nature constantly yearns for great and powerful things. We yearn for slavery to sin and earthly pleasures. Instead of seeking out the truth of the Gospel, we continually want to hear sermons on such trivial things as earthly wealth, fleeting honor, and worldly success.

In his sermon on our text, Luther says that such preaching only pertains to the belly. Earthly riches are only bones and leftovers from the masters' tables and thrown to the dogs. But Christ is speaking here about true, eternal, and spiritual freedom!

Many of the people who flocked to Jesus only wanted Him for earthly blessings. Two chapters before our text, we find the account of Jesus Feeding the Five Thousand. John records in 6:14, "When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" But they weren't looking for a savior from sin. They wanted political and earthly blessings. Jesus knew this! John goes on to report in verse 15, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself."

We live in a world that is more and more dominated by politicians and celebrities. They try to convince us that they will save us from whatever impending disaster is trendy and fashionable at the moment.

But God continues to do extraordinary things in ordinary ways. Maybe you remember a time when God did an extraordinary thing for you in an ordinary way.

Every day, babies continue to be brought to the font. They are set free from sin, death, and the devil by the washing of water and the word in holy baptism. Every day, troubled hearts are comforted by the grace and mercy found in Jesus' cross and resurrection. Every day, friends share the message of life and salvation with each other. Every day, a lost and condemned slave to sin is welcomed into the family of God, where they will dwell with Him forever. Because, "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." And as they say, "The rest is eternity!"

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 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 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L Almighty God, thank You for restoring Your eternal Gospel to the Church through Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and the rest of the reformers who point to the Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross for the full payment for our salvation.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, thank You for faithful pastors and teachers who through the ages have proclaimed justification by faith through grace for Christ's sake.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, grant that we would remain faithful to Your word of truth and be free indeed through the forgiveness freely given to us by Jesus.

C Amen.

L O Lord, give us vigilant and wise leaders. Be with all who serve to keep us safe. Bring peace and harmony to our nation in this time of contentiousness. Protect those in harm's way because of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East that cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer. Grant that the new found peace in Gaza would be sustained.

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 according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.

C Amen.

L O Lord, we give You thanks for all Your servants who have departed this life in faith. We especially bless You today for the great reformers of Your Church who call us back to the Gospel and to the righteousness we have in Christ alone. Keep us in fellowship with them, and bring us at last to our heavenly home and the joy of seeing our Redeemer face to face; 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.

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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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 THE FESTIVAL OF THE REFORMATION October 27— November 1, 2025

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 meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

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

Verse of the Day: Luke 12:32

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Fear not, little flock, Alleluia.
G 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.
G 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.
G 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.
G 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.

You may have heard the expression, “The more things change; the more things stay the same” or its companion saying, “Some things never change.”

One of the things that never changes is God’s love for us and His promise of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, opposition to God’s word is another thing that never changes.

From time to time, every Christian faces ridicule for faith in Jesus. We are called upon to defend what we believe. We must speak up for the Gospel.

Sometimes those who belittle the Gospel are powerful people. We may stand in fear before them, but God will never abandon us in those situations.

Moses stood before Pharaoh. Daniel survived the lion’s den. Peter and John boldly testified about Jesus before the rulers of the people and elders. Paul spoke of the resurrection before Felix. At the time of the Reformation, Luther stood before the Emperor in Worms. God didn’t fail any of them. And He will continue to bless us when we are called upon to defend the Gospel in front of powerful people. Psalm 119:46 never changes and still holds true today: “I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame.”

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.

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 from 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 (*Sola* means alone in Latin). 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.

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. 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 ¹God 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 ³though 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 ⁵God 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 ⁷The 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 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;
C **the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

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.

Psalm 46 was Martin Luther's inspiration for his world-renowned hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." There were many times that 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 been shared during the pandemic.

God granted him a wonderful wife in Katherine Von Bora and 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 many 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.

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.

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."

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 that you tell someone about 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—Reformation Day

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

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

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

²⁷Then 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. ²⁸For 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—All Saints Day

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."

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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