



## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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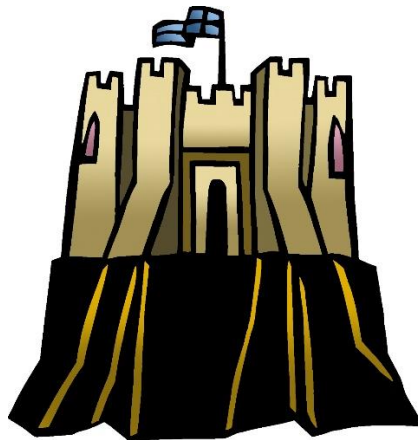
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**Reformation Sunday**

**October 30, 2022**

**ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12**

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hə́ŋqəmiṇə́m̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our God, our refuge and strength, our very present help in times of trouble. For in God there is no fear, as we are made glad by the blessing and presence of God. So together we regard the works of the Lord our stronghold, we sing praise for all that God has done and continues to do, and we are made to be still in our knowledge of who God is, exalted over all the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### GATHERING HYMN: You Are Holy (#525)

#### KYRIE

The musical notation for the Kyrie section consists of three staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the Kyrie: 'Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.' The second staff contains the melody for the second line: 'Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.' The third staff contains the melody for the third line: 'Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.' The lyrics are written below the notes, and the music ends with a double bar line.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

## SONG OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;

yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.  
yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.

Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;

ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.

Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;

yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God you are our refuge and strength, our stronghold with whom there is no fear. Embolden us with your Word, and remind us of the truth of the freedom in your name through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

*The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.*

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **PSALM: Psalm 46**

<sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup>**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,  
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

<sup>3</sup>though its waters rage and foam,  
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

<sup>4</sup>**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

<sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;  
God shall help it at the break of day.

<sup>6</sup>**The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;  
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

<sup>8</sup>**Come now, regard the works of the LORD,  
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

<sup>9</sup>behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;  
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

<sup>10</sup>**“Be still, then, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

<sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

#### **SECOND READING: Romans 3:19-28**

A reading from Romans.

*Paul’s words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ’s death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.*

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup>For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law

comes the knowledge of sin.

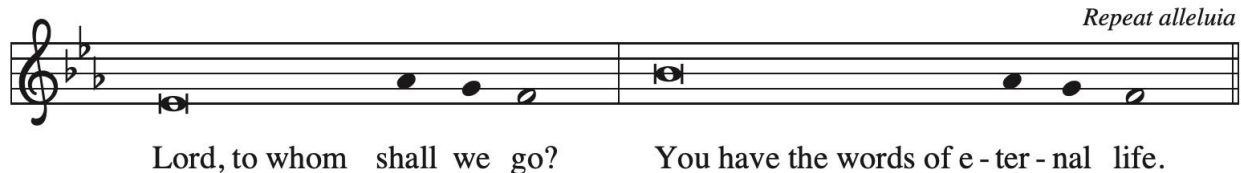
<sup>21</sup>But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, <sup>22</sup>the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



### GOSPEL: John 8:31-36

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.*

<sup>31</sup>Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." <sup>33</sup>They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON

God, by the power of your Spirit may our hearts and minds be opened to your Word, that we might live in the freedom that you graciously give, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Communication is hard, isn't it? Throughout our lives we are taught to express ourselves, relate to others, and properly relay our thoughts and feelings. This communication comes in many different forms, both verbal and non, each with their pros and cons in helping us to actually get out what we want to get out.

Yet, even with all these tools for communication at our disposal, somehow it is still difficult and misunderstandings happen all the time. We don't always get what is said or what we're being told. We find ourselves having to explain what we mean over and over. We continue to have a hard time seeing each other eye-to-eye, being on the same page, and hearing or being heard. Like I said, communication is hard.

I think one of the reasons for this is that we have so many ways to communicate that sometimes they conflict with each other. Like, imagine telling someone that you're listening when you're clearly texting someone on your phone. Or instructing someone to "turn right here" while pointing to the left. Or even saying "I'm not mad" in the most angry sounding voice ever.

And this isn't a good or bad thing per se, it's just what it is. In most cases we correct ourselves and move on. But the problem comes when we make strong assumptions about the other and what they mean, and we go ahead and act on said assumptions. This then further breaks down communication, as now emotion might be clouding the issue with tempers flaring and patience wearing thin. Then either side might feel insulted, offended, or invalidated as more assumptions are made and judgements start to pass.

Sure, this might sound a bit extreme, but I think it happens more often than we think. I see this a fair amount in the news over current events and what causes some of the conflict around the world. I see this in our communities and relationships when there is friction and in fighting. And I see this in Jesus' interaction with the people in today's gospel lesson.

We're likely familiar with this passage, if only for the sheer reason that we get it every year on Reformation Sunday. Jesus is talking to those who already believe, those who are on his side, preaching to the choir, so to speak. He tells them that the truth will make them free. And here is where I see the communication breaks down. They act almost offended at Jesus, thinking that he's insinuating that they need to be freed in the first place. "We're descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone" is their response.

Ok, that's nice. Not true whatsoever, but ok. That's not even what Jesus said though. So why the snarky comeback?

Well, the communication broke down somehow. Assumptions were made, tempers were a bit on the rise, and walls of defense were built to protect the Jews and their feelings. I get it though, the Jewish people in that time were the underdogs. For generations at this point they had put their trust in an unseen God who had promised them deliverance and redemption but they continue to be conquered and taken over and even exiled out of their land for a time. They were supposed to be God's people, but for centuries it felt like they were anything but. So they might have been triggered by the "freedom" comment. Maybe they were a little sensitive to the reminder and felt a bit sore. Emotions came into the picture and they just reacted to the misunderstanding.

I mean, their freedom was something that they had a lot of pride in, something they had trusted to be true for so long, something in which their identity was found. So when it felt a bit threatened, they got defensive, then retaliated and clapped back. They stood up for what they believed in, their convictions, their understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

So how dare Jesus insinuate that their freedom isn't actually theirs? How dare Jesus even suggest that they needed more than what they've already earned? How dare Jesus try to take them away from their God-given rights and powers?

And that was the problem right there. There was miscommunication because of the assumptions that the Jewish people made. They passed judgement because of what they already believed in. They were offended because they thought they and they alone had the intrinsic authority to determine what is right and what is wrong. It was their conviction that as descendants of Abraham they were God's only people. Their understanding of the world and their place in it actually led them to believe that they were God in God's place.

Of course, they wouldn't admit that, it sounds like the blasphemy of blasphemies. But the unfortunate fact of the matter is that... we all kind of do this. We all believe that we are always right, or at least 90% of the time. We believe that we can ultimately determine what is right and wrong. We even might think we can decide who is loved by God or not. We effectively put ourselves in God's place by seeing ourselves as the divine authority on matters. These assumptions that we make simply are not true.

And I think that is what Jesus is talking about when he talks about the truth and how it sets us free. It's the truth about who God is that liberates us. It's the truth about who we are that reveals to us God's grace. And it's the truth about how God can even love and forgive in spite of all shortcomings, assumptions, and miscommunications that saves us. This is the truth that will set us free.

Not free to do whatever we want whenever we want, mind you. Not free from rules, regulations, and responsibilities. Not even free from the tyrannies and broken systems of the world.

But free from these assumptions that we make. Free from the judgements that we pass. Free from trying to be God in God's place.

And so instead, we can be inspired by this grace that is shown to us. We can find joy in God's steadfast love that is freely given. We can trust in this truth and be set free to be God's people in the world, living in faith and community and proclaiming God's Word for the sake of the world.

Just over 500 years ago, there was this guy named Martin Luther, who was well versed on this freedom that we just talked about. But the problem was that he didn't see it proclaimed in the church or anywhere for that matter, and so he wanted to change that, or reform it, as it were. And while that resulted in at least our denomination as we know it, the problem hasn't been solved. The assumptions and judgements persist to this day. The miscommunications and misunderstandings still result in conflict and friction. We still like to draw lines between us and them, it's just that the lines are now in different places.

And so it's important for us to keep aware of these attitudes that we might have of superiority and exclusivity. It's important for us to keep watch over ourselves knowing that while the shame and guilt of our sin has been removed from us, that doesn't mean that we are removed from sin. It's important for us to keep being reformed in the truth of God's promises of redemption and justification that welcome us all, even those that we don't like or agree with. And above all, it's important for us to always be reminded of the truth of who God is, who we are, and how we all work together, that we be freed from the assumptions and from judging and being judged by others.

Because no matter how much we assume to know about the world, we aren't the authority on right and wrong, only God can be that. In spite of our best intentions, we cannot save ourselves or each other, only God can do that. Regardless of our understandings of God or ourselves, we cannot be freed on our own, but only by God's truth of grace and mercy can we be humbled with our hearts opened to receive God's promises of salvation and love, welcoming us to live with God and all the saints in God's kingdom forever.

This was the goal of the Reformation that began all those years ago. This was the hope of Martin Luther that we'd all see God's grace. This is what Jesus wanted for all people to see, the freedom that comes from knowing God's expansive and enduring love that forms and reforms our hearts and minds to learn to live more in line with wonders and joy that God had laid out for us.

So in our time of remembering the Reformation that started over 500 years ago, may we constantly be reformed in humility, that in spite of assumption and miscommunication, we will always know God's truth, the truth that sets us free. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (#504)**

**CREED (p. 104)**

Reformed by the grace of Christ, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's 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.**



## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called into the reforming grace and freedom of God, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, “by your liberating mercy, O Lord,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, you are our refuge and strength and you help us in our trouble. By your Word we are redeemed and made free. May we always be aware of your presence in and around our community, and may we proclaim the truth of your love always. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, in you there is no fear, even when we feel unsure or unsafe you lift us up by your grace. Strengthen us in our ministry of hope and peace, and inspire all people with your message of love. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Kathy, assistant to the bishop Rebekah, and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for St. Peter’s Estonian Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their interim pastor Andres Rebane; Peace Lutheran Church in Vernon and their pastor David Hunter; and for all our Lutheran clergy serving in Anglican parishes. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, the mountains and seas and all that you have made proclaim your glory, and through them we see your blessing in what you’ve entrusted to us. May our stewardship of this planet be pleasing to you and reflect the love that you’ve first given us. We pray for all people living in areas affected by harsh weather and natural disasters, that all might find safety and security. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, our cities and country shall not be shaken when your justice and grace reign in our hearts, but our sinfulness has led us into greed and selfishness. Grant genuine humility to all world leaders and politicians, that we might all move toward true peace with our neighbours. We pray for all areas of the world facing war and political turmoil, and we especially remember those that we’ve sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, you are our stronghold and in you we find healing and wholeness as your love washes over us all. Be with those among us who are ill, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and may we all realise the freedom found in you. Especially we pray for Diana; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Amika; Jack; Walter; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

God, we stand in awe at the majesty of your name and you are exalted in all the earth. You welcome us to live in freedom with all the saints of all times and places, and you inspire us into faith in our communities. Remind us always of our connection with you and your people, that we might boldly stand in your truth forever. By your liberating mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your truth and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## MEAL

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who teaches us the truth about your freeing grace and liberating love that joins us with the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

O God, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Over the eons your merciful might evolved our home, our communities, and our hearts. Here by your love and promises we are in awe of all that you do, offering our worship and praise and thanks. For in you there is freedom, by your grace we are redeemed, and through your Son Jesus we know of your salvation and eternal welcome into your kingdom.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his disciples for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

So we are gathered around this table in remembrance, in worship, and in awe, together proclaiming this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

O God our Creator, you are present with us in this meal as you bless us with all that you do and all that you are, granting us a freedom and peace that surpasses all understanding and revealing to us a love that never ends, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)**

Together in the freedom of the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those**

**who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial**

**and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours,**

**now and forever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see God's liberating love.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMNS:** Lamb of God (ACS booklet)  
What Feast of Love (#487)  
I Come with Joy (#482)



**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We thank you, O God, that you have strengthened our hearts through this feast of life and salvation. Shine the light of Christ on our path, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING**

**BLESSING**

God, the Source of glory and grace,  
God, the Saving Word of life,  
God, the Spirit of truth and freedom  
bless you all, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** Baptized and Set Free (#453)

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live freely by God's grace.

**Thanks be to God.**