



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Reformation Sunday

October 26, 2025



“Cause / Effect”

Truth / Freedom

Many people believe that freedom means being able to do whatever you want. Jesus says that is absolutely false. “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples. You will also know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31,32). Jesus says that living however you want does not make you free. In fact, if you take that attitude toward life you will end up a slave. You will only be free—spiritually, emotionally, eternally—“If you remain in my word” and therefore “know the truth.” Truth is the cause that effects freedom. A key principle Martin Luther established through the Reformation is *sola scriptura*, Scripture alone. Who or what is the final arbiter of the truth that provides freedom? Scripture alone. Heirs of the Reformation still bind themselves to Scripture. Does restricting ourselves in this manner curtail freedom? Just the opposite is true. God’s truth brings freedom from slavery to sinful delusions and the burden of guilt. This week we celebrate this cause and effect—the truth sets us free!

First Reading³ Jeremiah 31:31-34

Through Jeremiah, the Lord describes the new covenant established by the promised Messiah, the covenant that has been established with us. The two-sided covenant of old is no more. God had been faithful; Israel had not. The new covenant is a promise signed in the blood of the Christ. This new covenant is now revealed to nations. The teachings and promises of the Lord will be written on hearts and minds and sin will be remembered “no more.” For the Lord’s righteousness will come to hearts of faith.

Second Reading³ Galatians 5:1-6

Martin Luther called the book of Galatians, “My Katie von Bora—I am wedded to it.” Paul’s letter speaks clearly against work righteousness and plainly about grace. That meant much to Luther who had staked his life on both topics. Why would anyone risk so much over words? Because the very freedom of the Gospel was at stake. Either we are free by grace or slaves under the law; there is no middle ground. Attempts to justify ourselves by outward acts do not result in justification at all—whether you are first-century Judaizers, sixteen-century clerics or twenty-first century moralists. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. So, Paul says, stand firm and be faithful to the Word of God that sets us free.

Gospel³ John 8:31-36

Holding to the Word of the Lord is a fruit of faith that demonstrates the reality of our discipleship. Stepping outside the truth of scripture invalidates this status. This is no small task in our world of subjective truth and unionism. But with discipleship comes understanding and the knowledge of the true mystery of Christ. With this knowledge comes freedom. No more are we slaves to sin. We are free to live before God in righteousness and holiness as his children, members of his house forever.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 46 B “God Is Our Refuge and Strength”

The Church sings Psalm 46 in services that celebrate the power of the Lord in the face of every evil attack. It inspired the hymn “A Mighty Fortress” by Martin Luther. He said, “We sing Psalm 46 to praise the only true God for being with us. He wonderfully upholds his Word and Christendom against the very gates of hell, against the rage of every demon, the world, the flesh, sin, and death. Our little spring is a free-flowing source of living water.”

Gospel Acclamation

John 8:31,32

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Prayer of the Day

Gracious Lord, our refuge and strength, pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your Word, protect and comfort them in all temptations, defend them against all their enemies, and bestow on the church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

864 “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Luther’s well known work has been nicknamed “the battle hymn of the Lutheran Reformation.” Verses 1-3 of the original text were inspired by Psalm 46; verse 4 arose directly from Luther’s persecution experience. The text expresses trust in God’s protection amidst the battle that Christians wage against the devil and other evil forces – a battle won by Christ (v2). The closing line of the text provides much comfort: “Our victory is won; the kingdom’s ours forever!”

Church Year Season ¹

Season after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Colors & Symbolism

Red

Red, the color of fire, is the color for the Festival of Pentecost. It signifies the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire over them when the Holy Spirit descended at the first Pentecost, and reminds us that the Spirit is active in the Church, keeping it in the Gospel until Christ comes again. The color red is also used for festivals of renewal in the Holy Spirit, such as Reformation, missions, and ordination. The color also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs – the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

Minor Festivals

St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles (October 28)

Nain Paraments

Reformation Sunday

Superfrontal, Lectern antependium, and Pastor’s stole: Luther’s seal (or Luther’s rose) is the most recognized symbol for Lutheranism. It was the seal that was designed by Dr. Martin Luther to represent his theology and summarize the Christian faith. From Luther’s own explanation: “The cross is black to remind us Jesus died to take away our sins. It is placed within a red heart to remind us that faith in Christ crucified saves us. The heart is red because Jesus shed his blood for us that we may live. In his great love, God has given us forgiveness and righteousness through the gift of faith. The white rose reminds us that our faith gives us joy, comfort, and peace. White is the color of purity and reminds us that we have peace with our holy God like the angels enjoy. The blue background represents the sky and reminds us that we will meet Jesus in heaven. By the Holy Spirit’s power and through faith in Jesus’ promise, we grasp onto this hope of heavenly joy. The gold ring reminds us of heaven’s eternal joys. The endless shape of the circle and the preciousness of gold remind us that the treasure of God’s love for us will endure forever.”

The Latin words on the left and right of the altar superfrontal – *Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura* – are translated, “By Grace alone, By Faith alone, By Scripture alone.” This was and is the most common motto of the Lutheran Reformation. We are saved by grace, through faith (not by works), as revealed and brought to us through God’s Holy Word (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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