ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service

Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026



The Beginning of the End

It's Time to … Stay Steadfast

Jesus told his followers, "You will be hated by all people because of my name" (Matthew 10:22). Satan and the world hate Christ and anyone who confesses their faith in him. So, the time in between Christ's first and second coming is going to be perilous for believers. A good example — Martin Luther. All he wanted was to share the pure gospel with the world. For trying to do that, both political and religious leaders attempted to end his life. The Festival of the Reformation emphasizes the true Church's unfailing reliance on the Word of God and her unflinching testimony to that Word even in the face of harsh persecution. Today we pray that the Lord will keep us steadfast in faith, move us to willingly bear our crosses in the face of hardship and persecution, and rejoice that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone!

First Lesson [1] Daniel 6:10-12,16-23

They didn't persecute Daniel because of theses nailed to a church door; they didn't accuse him because of stirring words spoken over a pile of condemned books. They persecuted Daniel because he prayed in his home. Daniel made a bold confession and faithful witness with his knees. No godless king or immutable law would change the homage due to God. No threats, no pain, not even death would change Daniel's loyalty to the Word of God that called on him to worship the LORD his God only. So Daniel went home and prayed, just as he had done before. He was faithful, even in the face of certain persecution. For the Christian, most persecution doesn't come from public writings like Luther, but from private acts like Daniel. We live our faith and are persecuted because of it. We don't face a den of lions, but persecution abounds when we're faithful to the Word. We lose relationships because of moral purity; we lose promotions because of worship priorities; we lose friendships because we won't join in sinful talking or walking. Faithfulness to God's Word in the face of persecution requires trust. God shut the lions' mouths to answer the king's question: Is your God able to rescue you? Yes, he is. God shut the lions' mouths to show his Church of all the ages that God is able to guard and keep his own. You can trust him and be faithful to his Word in the face of any persecution.

Second Reading [1] Romans 3:19-28

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he writes of both Law and Gospel. He writes of God's anger against sin and God's righteousness given through Jesus. Here, at this transitional point, is the promise of Jesus' righteousness and the freedom he brings. Yes, freedom from sin and freedom to live in all righteousness comes to us who live by faith. We have been declared innocent, and no law will shackle us again. Now we live for him who has set us free.

Gospel [1] Matthew 10:16-23

Throughout the history of the Church, the story of faithfulness to the Word of God has always been the story of persecution. And rightly so, because Jesus promised it! Who would send defenseless sheep into a world of ravenous wolves? It makes no sense, yet that is precisely the plan that Jesus describes for his Church. It makes no sense—unless you are the Good Shepherd who wants his sheep to utterly depend on him. Our trust in Jesus doesn't guarantee an absence of persecution, but faithfulness in spite of it. We will witness to the Word of God before brothers, fathers, children, governors and princes. Jesus promised, "All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." What comfort that must have been for Martin Luther, whose faithful witness caused him to be expelled from his order, excommunicated from his church, and outlawed from his empire. Before the kings and princes of Europe, Luther gave faithful witness at Worms: "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

Psalm of the Day [4] 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 Luke 12:32

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."

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.

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

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.

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 Scripture* – 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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