

Reformation, October 25, 2020, Order of Worship

Greeting In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Call to Worship Psalm 46 (Martin Luther's favorite Psalm) *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Reflection on Psalm 46: God, our Lord, is our very present help in trouble. In this time of physical distancing, surrounded by the pandemic, racial protests, riots, political turmoil—in the midst of all this, God, our Lord, is still our very present help in trouble. **"Be still, and know that I am God!"**

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God (and of one another):

C: Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P: God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ! Led by the Holy Spirit, live now in freedom to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (public domain) LBW 229, ELW 504
(words by Martin Luther, based on Psalm 46)

*A mighty fortress is our God, a sword and shield victorious;
He breaks the cruel oppressor's rod and wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe has sworn to work us woe!
With craft and dreadful might he arms himself to fight. On earth he has no equal.*

*Though hordes of devils fill the land all threat'ning to devour us,
We tremble not, unmoved we stand; they cannot overpower us.
Let this world's tyrant rage; in battle we'll engage!
His might is doomed to fail; God's judgment must prevail. One little word subdues him.*

*God's Word forever shall abide, no thanks to foes who fear it;
For God himself fights by our side with weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house, goods, honor, child, or spouse,
Though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day. The kingdom's ours forever!*

The Kyrie In peace, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. For all these things we pray: Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A reading from Leviticus, the 19th chapter (19:1-2, 15-18) Note: Leviticus, the 3rd book of the Hebrew scriptures, is the source of most of the 613 laws, commandments, statutes, and ordinances which determined Jewish life in Bible times.

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. . . . Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the Lord. Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." Word of God, word of life.

Alleluia *Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!*

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 22nd chapter (22:34-40), Sermon (page 5)

Hymn of the Day ***Lord, Keep Us Steadfast*** (public domain)
(words by Martin Luther)

LBW 230, ELW 517

***Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word; curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from your Son and bring to nought all he has done.***

***Lord Jesus Christ, your power make known, for you are Lord of lords alone;
Defend your holy Church, that we may sing your praise triumphantly.***

***O Comforter of priceless worth, send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife and lead us out of death to life.***

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 (from *Sundays and Seasons*, ELCA worship guide) With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those who are in any kind of need.

Renew and inspire the church in the freedom of the gospel, O God. Where it is in error, reform it. Where it speaks your truth, strengthen it. Where it is divided, unify it. Ignite in us the working of the Holy Spirit. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

As the earth changes, as mountains shake and waters roar, may we care for this planet as a holy habitation for all living things. Sustain all peoples and lands suffering and recovering from natural disasters of any kind: COVID, floods, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, landslides, drought, famine, locusts, and any other source of hardship. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lead and guide areas of the world divided or traumatized by conflict, especially in our own land. Free all from slavery and human trafficking, and protect all who are in harm's way. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Release those who live in bondage to debts, chronic pain, or addictions. Grant your healing touch to all who are ill (lift up those you pray for). Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

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In this family of faith (your own family, or St. John/St. Stephen) we give thanks for courageous voices that have remained firm in their commitment to the One who frees us from sin and death. Centered in your grace, may we be unified in the hope of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Even in death, you free us and give us a place in your house. We give thanks for our ancestors who have shown us truth and freedom, especially Martin Luther and those who work for the renewal of the church. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sharing God's Peace (if you worship alone, add your specific prayers for peace here)

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Hymn *Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation* (public domain) LBW 367, ELW 645

*Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ, our head and cornerstone,
Chosen of the Lord and precious, binding all the Church in one;
Holy Zion's help forever and our confidence alone.*

*To this temple, where we call you, come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;
Come, with all your lovingkindness, hear your people as they pray;
And your fullest benediction shed within these walls today.*

*Praise and honor to the Father, praise and honor to the Son,
Praise and honor to the Spirit, ever three and ever one:
One in might and one in glory while unending ages run!*

Benediction: May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace. Amen.

May God's perfect peace that passes all understanding be with you and free you from all fear.