

WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
October 25, 2020
Reformation Sunday



I will put my law within
them, and I will write
it on their hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

You may make the sign of the cross; the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,
Who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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 judgement 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 Savior and Lord.**

Amen.

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 in freedom and newness
to do God's work in the world.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 31:31-34

New Revised Standard Version

A New Covenant

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It 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,^[a] says the LORD. ³³But 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. ³⁴No 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.

SECOND LESSON

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 silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

Righteousness through Faith

²¹ But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ^[a] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement^[b] 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; ²⁶ it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.^[c]

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

GOSPEL

John 8:31-36

True Disciples

³¹ Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ 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’?”

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

SERMON

“A REFORMATION FOR TODAY”

Preaching text: Romans 3:19-28

Happy Reformation Sunday! The mood this year is perfect for getting us in a reformation state of mind. There is social unrest. We are about the experience political upheaval. Times are ripe for some kind of major change.

Today we celebrate the 503rd anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. That was another time that was ripe for major change. It was October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic priest, wanted to debate some concerns he had with the Church. He had 95 items he wanted to discuss. So, he nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Among Luther's concerns was that the worship services should be in the language of the people, rather than in Latin. Luther felt the people should be able to commune with both bread and wine. Luther believed priests should be allowed to marry. And the big concern Luther had was that the Church should not be extorting money from the people by the selling of indulgences. That was the practice the Church had to raise money to build all those glorious cathedrals throughout Europe. The people were told that if they gave a certain amount of money their sins would be forgiven, and they wouldn't spend eternity in hell or purgatory.

The Roman Catholic Church has made most of the reforms Luther called for, but it's taken a long time. And some things still haven't changed. Priests still cannot marry. Women have a way to go in terms of equality among the hierarchy. But the changes go on ... as we heard the Pope last week condone same sex unions.

The Roman Catholic Church isn't the only Christian body that still needs to make some changes. Our Lutheran Church also needs to make some changes. Our Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, when she was installed years ago, called our Church to be built on four affirmations.

1. **We are Church.** That means we are not merely a social club, we are not a welfare agency, we are not a literary group, we are not a book club. That

means we are in the business of helping people build a faith that will carry them through all the experiences of life. There's no promise that things will be easy. We have the promise from God that we will not be alone. We are part of the Communion of Saints, we are followers of Jesus, and we are children of the one, Holy God.

2. **We are Lutheran.** That means to me that we are made right with God not by anything WE do ... but we are right with God because of what God has done. We are people of grace. We are not better than other people. God calls us to share this understanding of grace with others.
3. **We are the Church together.** That means to me that we are to bond with each other and not be divided. We end up disagreeing with one another in so many ways. One of the great Christian leaders in the last century was Pope John the 23rd. He presided over the 2nd Vatican Council in 1962 where many of Martin Luther's concerns were addressed. Pope John said it beautifully, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity!" The one unity we have as Christians is the ancient confession "Jesus is Lord!" Everything else we can have different opinions about. But most of all, we are to relate to each other in love.
4. **We are the Church for the sake of the world.** This means to me that the Church today is to be the Body of Christ in the world. Jesus has no other voice to proclaim the truth other than ours. Jesus has no feet to go places other than ours. Jesus has no hands to help others other than ours. And Jesus has no heart with which to love others than ours.

Bishop Eaton's words about our call to the world seems counter-intuitive during this time that we are being taught how to live in isolation. It is easy to forget our call to be the presence of Jesus to the world when we are so focused on our own country's problems.

It is good to be reminded this Reformation Sunday of our unity. There is so much that divides us. If we can say together, "Jesus is Lord!" and realize that everything else is secondary, we stand to make a real difference in our world. Imagine the influence Christians could have if as a worldwide community we were unified? It may not happen in this life. But it is God's will for us.

This is a time of great uncertainty. God was active during Luther's Reformation in ways we can only see in retrospect from our vantage point in history. It is exciting to think how God is moving among us to bring about something new! Are there ways you have seen God active in the chaos of 2020? How is God calling you to be open to something new?

AMEN.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

On this Reformation Sunday, let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.



Heavenly Father, it's no wonder that Jesus' coming into the world upset the whole order of God's Chosen People. The law had been given to them as a covenant at Mount Sinai. Their job was to try to follow it. But with Jesus, something new happened: The Covenant changed. No longer was it built on obedience to the law; but it was established on faith. It was built on a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and His shed blood on the cross. It was based on God's mercy to sinful people who were unable to keep the law. **Lord in your mercy...**

Saint Paul in Romans says, *"For through the law comes the knowledge of sin."* It revealed humankind's inability to satisfy God's requirements for righteousness. Something else was needed. God had a better way. It was *"Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood."* Thereby, *"a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law."* Lord, prosper the work of the Church, following in the footsteps of the Reformers. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world. Lord, this is an important week in our country. We pray wisdom for all who cast votes in Tuesday's election. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We need God-fearing leaders to rule our land. We pray for freedom, truth and liberty to be the guiding principles of our nation. Jesus said in the Gospel, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* Jesus Christ is the truth. *If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed."* Yes, Lord, we are free when we are bound to you. **Lord in your mercy...**

Remember this congregation, its pastor and people, as we share the love of Jesus. Touch those who have asked for prayer with healing, comfort and peace. Hear the petitions of our hearts as we name them before you. **Lord in your mercy...**

God set before us the New Covenant confirmed by the Reformers of every age. No longer must we earn our salvation. God says, *"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."* Thank you, Mighty God, for your mercy, in Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen

CAROLYN LINN

do not be anxious about anything
but in everything by prayer ...
with thanksgiving present your
requests to God.
Philippians 4:6



PRAYER CONCERNS

Members in Need of Prayer:

Karla Sutton
Paul Werfelmann
David Adamcik
Mary & Patrick Norris and
Children Alex, Isaac, and Michelle
Margie Kinler
Juana & Anthony On &
Extended Family
Richard & Kay Schumacher
Karen Kubar
Irene Pierini
Jocelyn Miller
Arlene Robbins
Kirsten Linder
Stacy Lairson
Jim Thompson
Addie Dornbusch
Neil & Verna Walden
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush
Chris Dueker
Connie Alvarado
Susan Berg
Dee Wright
Steve McQuillan
George Weber
Jen & Matt (The Wilk's Daughter & husband)

Family and Friends:

Phil Chavez
Taylor Waltrip & Family
Candice Frost (Margie Kinler's Grand-
daughter) & her friend Sharon Ferris
Mickey Paulo
Janet Sharp (Diane's Sister)
Barbara Lester
Kelley Kim
Jade Dixon
Karen (Sharon Rowley's Cousin)
Anthony Cholicho
Jim & Margie (Liz's Grandpa and his wife)
Kim Carlson
Denise Maxwell (The Wilk's sister-in-law)
Marlene Miller (Jackie & Ted Miller's sister-in-law)
Melissa Melton
Kim Boren & Family
Kathy Edison
Judie Meadows
Joan Rollin
Margie Poole
Sandy Robbins
Kathy Christiansen
Arlynne Turnquist
Amy Conley
Mike D
Michael Horne
Dee Dee Mello
Betty Synder
Roger Robbins
Trey Hofmann (Grandson of Alan)
Eladio, Celia & Family (Roeding Family)
Jaylyssa (Roeding Student)
Betty Gowens (Debbie West's Best Friend)
Diane Changnon (Friend of Sandy T.)
Karl Ritterbush's Brother-in-law
Sandy's Neighbor Linda
Lori & Jeff Tuttle (Autumn Hay's Friend)
Janet Mobley-Hayes (William Hayes Mother)


*Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer*



The Lord's Prayer

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.

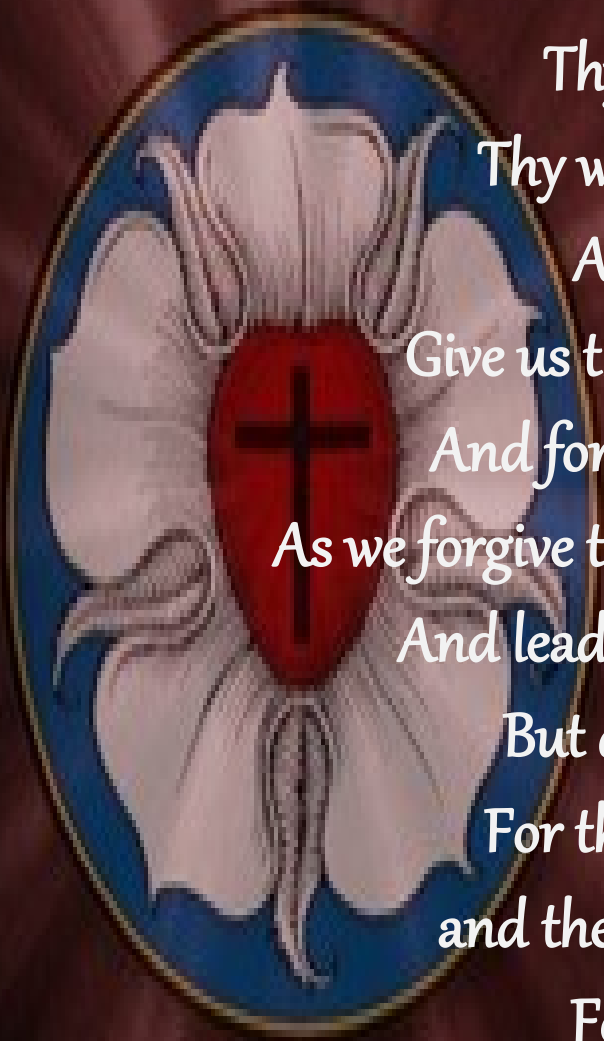
For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.

Amen

Matthew 6:9-13





*"Then you will know
the truth,
and the truth
will set you free."*

John 8:32

Kathy has included a page for taking notes while you go through the Worship Devotional and a page to color. It has been found that coloring reduces stress and calms a person.

{sermon notes}

sermon title: _____ { date: _____ }

{notes}

{key verses }

{worship songs }



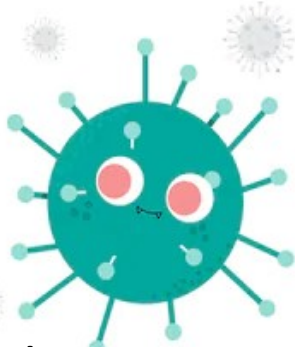
{prayers}

DID YOU KNOW THAT SAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER TAKES EXACTLY AS LONG AS THE CDC RECOMMENDS YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?



*Love your neighbor. Love your God.
Wash and Pray.*

Stay Home



Stay Safe

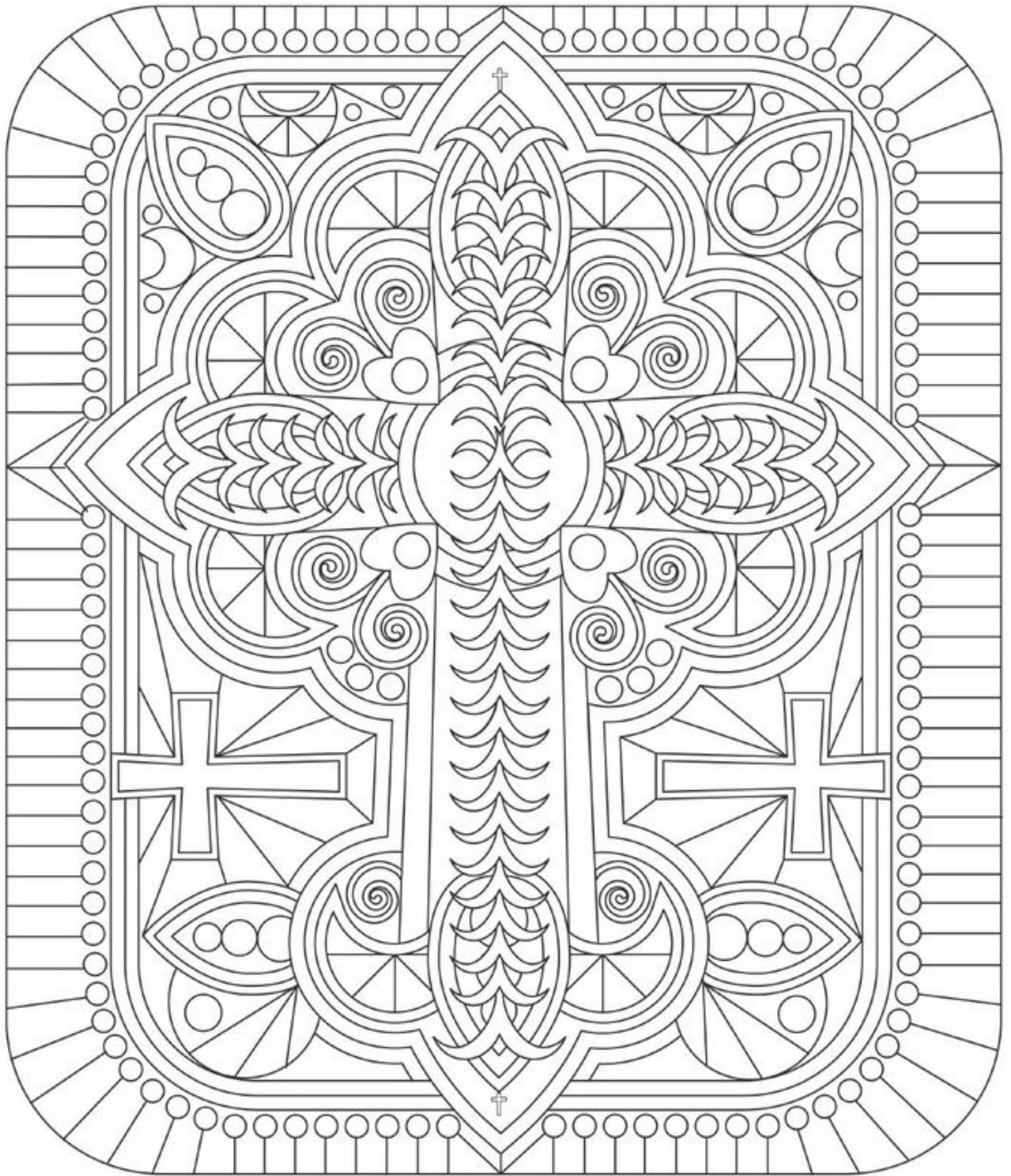


STAY IN PEACE! SERVE THE LORD! WASH YOUR HANDS! THANKS BE TO GOD!

Our mission statement:

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

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... take up the cross, and follow Me.
Mark 10:21