

*Reformation Sunday*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*October 31, 2021*



1812 North Highland Avenue  
Clearwater, Florida 33755  
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! 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.

**GATHERING SONG**

*All Are Welcome*

Verses 1 & 3

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly  
 live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how  
 hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and  
 vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of  
*Refrain*  
 Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,  
 all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950  
 Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen  
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3 Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

### **GREETING**

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **FIRST READING**

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

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: Now we know that everything in the Law applies to those who live under the Law, in order to stop all human excuses and bring the whole world under God's judgment. For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned. But now God's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets gave their witness to it. God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. But by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous. In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate his

righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus. What, then, can we boast about? Nothing! And what is the reason for this? Is it that we obey the Law? No, but that we believe. For we conclude that a person is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the Law commands.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

**John 8:31-36**

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

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 8th chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

So Jesus said to those who believed in him, “If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” “We are the descendants of Abraham,” they answered, “and we have never been anybody's slaves. What do you mean, then, by saying, ‘You will be free’?” Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave does not belong to a family permanently, but a son belongs there forever. If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free.”

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **Free, Indeed?**

Today the scriptures tell us that God’s grace comes freely, as a gift. But is anything really free? Advertisements claiming “free” goods or services pique our attention: What’s the catch? What does the small print say? Even beyond the world of commerce, we know that nothing comes without a price: time and sacrifice are required for a scholarship to college, a promotion at work, a happy marriage, a worry-free retirement. Our worthiness and success can seem to hang on our ability to perform, to do well, to get things right, to excel. Even with those closest to us—friends, coworkers, and family members—we may feel just one mistake or misstep away from losing their approval. In such a world, is God any different?

Yet before we were even born, before our first exam or job interview, before our first failure or sin, before our first fight or our first loss, Jesus Christ hung on a cross to be a

sign that God's grace is free indeed. To his cross he drew every cost, every pain, every judgment, every failure—and what poured forth was only love, as pure gift. In his cross, there is no catch or small print; there is simply the divine love that has been there for us all along. This is the love of a God who made the world and called it good. It is the love of a God who formed us and gave us life. It is the love of a God who sees us, suffers with us, and binds up all our wounds.

Child of God, God loves you, deeply and freely. As an assembly, we are gathered by this truth. We practice it in the font and at the table, through our words and in our offerings. It calls us to always be reformed so God's grace and love may pour forth through us into the world, free of charge.

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

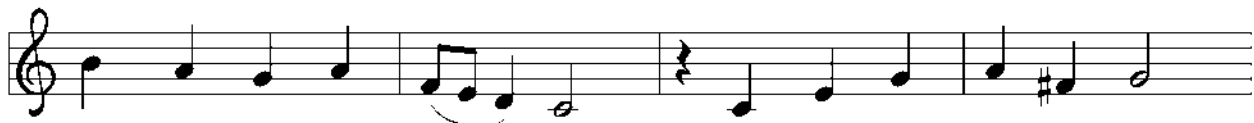
*A Mighty Fortress is Our God vs. 1 & 2*



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -  
 2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -  
 3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat - 'ning to de -  
 4 God's Word for - ev - er shall a - bide, no thanks to foes, who



to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and  
 ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom  
 your us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they  
 fear it; for God him - self fights by our side with



wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe  
 God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?  
 can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;  
 weap - ons of the Spir - it. Were they to take our house,



has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might  
 The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,  
 in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;  
 goods, hon - or, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched a - way,



Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Rose Marie Piff, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Jason Meadows, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Skylar Favos, April and David, Julianna, Riley, Carolyn & Drew, Kathy, Susie, and Terin, Jennifer Martinez, Diane Striley, Patricia Eunis, Sonya and Abigail Stone, and all those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters (including all those impacted by COVID-19 & this hurricane season).

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

Pastor: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pastor: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, 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.

Pastor: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION**

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, help those who go to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your everlasting presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**



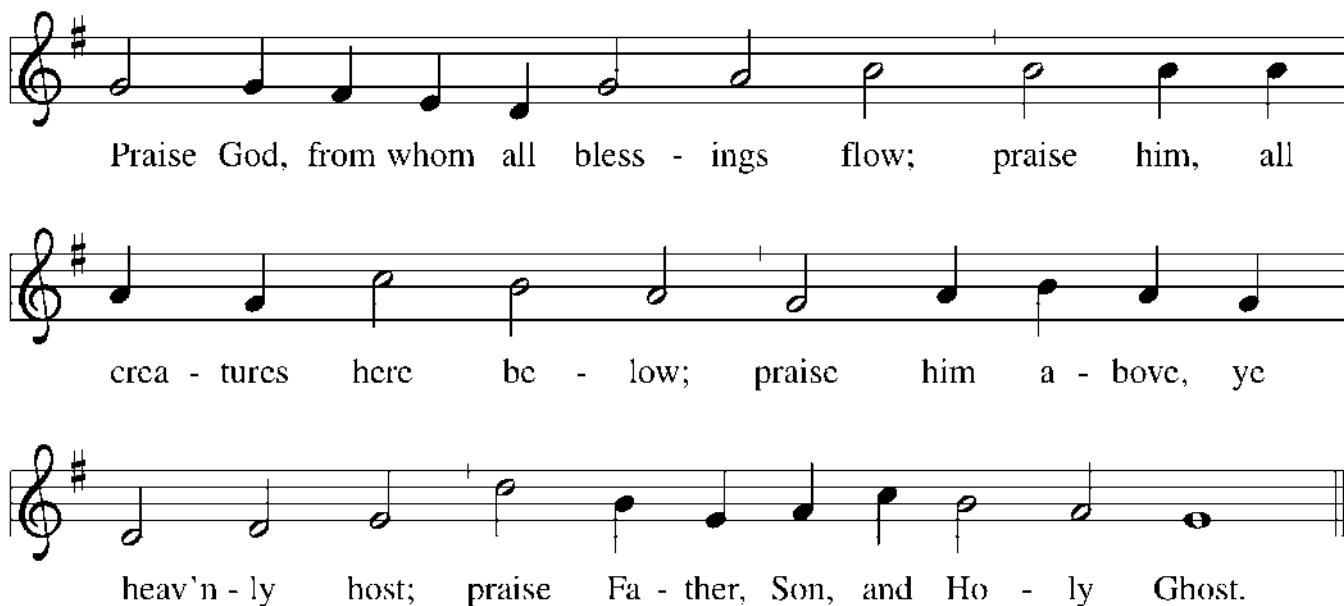
## BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *The Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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