

Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • Sunday, October 29th, 2023 •

Reformation Sunday



WELCOME/ GATHERING

PRELUDE: *Festival March on: “A Mighty Fortress”*

A. David Miller

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism,
as the presiding minister begins.*

P Blessed be God, the one who forms us, ☩ Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

C Amen.

P Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Steadfast and faithful God,

C you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world’s violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

P Beloved in Christ, God’s justice stretches beyond all understanding. God’s compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.

In ☩ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

C Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

All Stand & Sing

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
 vour 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,

he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.
 God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.
 God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.
 they can - not win the day. The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: EDN FIFTE DURG, Martin Luther
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

GREETING

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

C And also with you.

KYRIE

P

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C

Lord, have mer - cy.

P

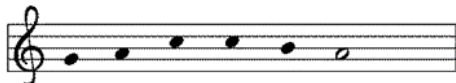

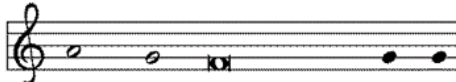

For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.

C

Lord, have mer - cy.

P

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

Pastor	Congregation
 <p>let us pray to the Lord.</p>	 <p>Lord have mer - cy.</p>
 <p>Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.</p>	 <p>A - men.</p>

THIS IS THE FEAST

Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



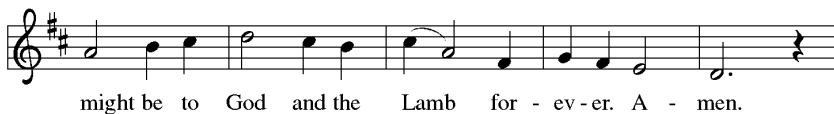
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

We invite children to come forward for a children's message before moving to children's church.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah, the thirty-first chapter.

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the Lord means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the Lord will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

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, 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.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Romans 3:19-28

A reading from Romans, the third chapter.

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.

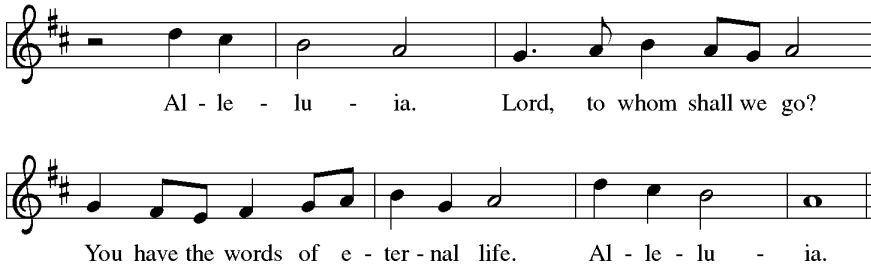
¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement 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; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL

John 8:31-36

P The holy gospel according to St. John, the eighth chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

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

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

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation is seated.

SERMON

Pastor Micah

Silence is Kept for Reflection.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*

All Stand & Sing

1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in your word; curb those who
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, send peace and

by de - ceit or sword would wrest the king - dom from your Son
Lord of lords a - lone; de - fend your ho - ly church, that we
u - ni - ty on earth; sup - port us in our fi - nal strife

and bring to naught all he has done.
may sing your praise e - ter - nal - ly.
and lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

APOSTLES CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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 OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God our parent, you call us your children and have made us siblings through your son Jesus. Heal the church's many divisions, bring understanding and peace where there has been contention and strife, and unite us in one body through the love of Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our creator, your hands have made the heights of the mountains, the depths of the sea, and the life that animates all creation. Bring relief to areas harmed by wildfires, floods, storms, and human carelessness. Renew the face of the earth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our ruler, the nations rage and the kingdoms shake, but your word stands fast forever. Let your justice and peace roll down like waters wherever there is strife, injustice, war, or religious conflict. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our champion, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Draw near to all who suffer. Be their rest and comfort. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our reformer, you make all things new. Free us from complacency, open us to unexpected ways, and kindle zeal in us for the future. We pray for young people affirming their baptism. With them, stir in us a desire for your wisdom. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our savior, you made yourself known in the lives of all who have died in the hope of your grace. We give thanks for the witness of reformers like Martin Luther and for all whose example has brought us closer to you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *To Sing Once More*

Church Choir

Awake our souls to sing once more the songs that long have silent been. From troubled nights and fearful days, our notes of praise and joy begin.

Inspired by hope, compelled by grace, we sing Your everlasting praise.

Most Holy God, Your song we seek and trust in Your unchanging ways.

With comfort Your eternal voice is music to our fainting soul. It speaks in times of hurt and wrong, it whispers peace, it makes us whole.

Arise, His children, rise again, your God and maker now adore. No Longer silent, lift your voice, awake your souls to sing once more.

Awake our souls to sing once more . Amen!

OFFERTORY RESPONSE: *Built on a Rock*

All Stand & Sing

1 Built on a rock the church shall stand, e - ven when stee - ples are
fall - ing; crum-bled have spires in ev - 'ry land, bells still are
chim-ing and call - ing—call - ing the young and old to rest, call-ing the
souls of those dis - tressed, long - ing for life ev - er - last - ing.

OFFERING PRAYER

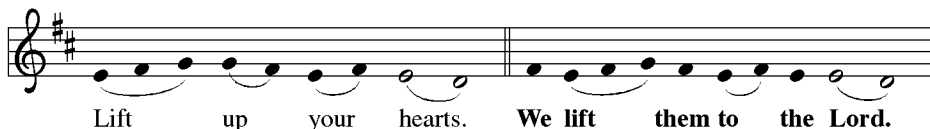
P Let us pray.

C God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

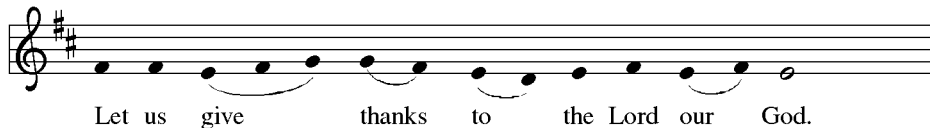
DIALOGUE

Pastor

Congregation



Pastor



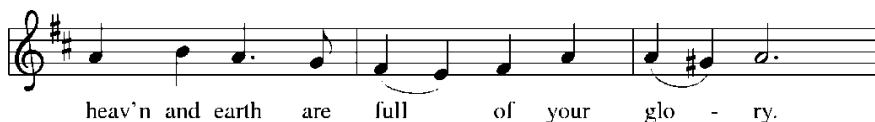
Cong.



PREFACE

P ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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,
 forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

C Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

*All people are welcome at the Lord's Table to receive Christ's real presence and grace.
You are invited forward to take a cup and then kneel around the altar as you're able.
You'll receive the bread and eat, then hold your cup to be filled with wine and drink.
You'll then return to your seat the way you came forward.*

LAMB OF GOD

All Sing



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



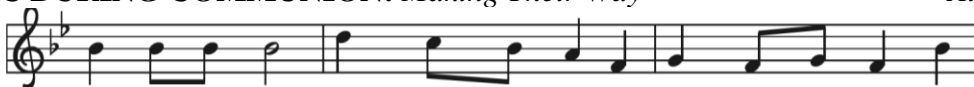
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION: *Making Their Way*

All Sing



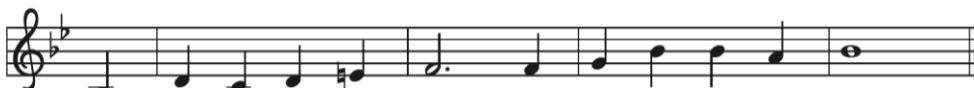
- 1 Mak-ing their way down through the a - ges, sin - ners and saints have
- 2 Mak-ing their way all the world o - ver, Chris - tians as - sem - ble
- 3 Mak-ing our way sea - son by sea-son, pil - grims, we jour - ney



heard God's call: wealth - y and poor, pow - er - ful, low - ly,
on this day, hear - ing the Word, shar - ing the Ban - quet,
till life's end, trav - el - ing light, shar - ing the rich - es,



Je - sus' dis - ci - ples, one and all. Gath - ered for wor - ship, of - fer - ing thanks,
learn - ing to walk in Je - sus' way. Mem - bers of Christ, u - nit - ed in love,
car - ing for strang - er as for friend, till in the joy of long - ing ful - filled,



the great - est with the least have come to share this feast.
they seek our God to know, and so to - geth - er grow.
to - geth - er we will come to our e - ter - nal home.

P The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Let us pray,

C Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BLESSING

P The God of glory, ☩ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: *Thy Strong Word*

All Stand & Sing



1 Thy strong word did cleave the dark - ness; at thy
2 Lo, on those who dwelt in dark - ness, dark as
3 Thy strong Word be - speaks us righ - teous; bright with
4 From the cross thy wis - dom shin - ing break - eth



speak - ing it was done. For cre - at - ed light we
night and deep as death, broke the light of thy sal -
thine own ho - li - ness, glo - rious now, we press toward
forth in con - qu'ring might; from the cross for - ev - er



thank thee, while thine or - dered sea - sons run.
va - tion, breathed thine own life - breath - ing breath.
glo - ry, and our lives our hopes con - fess.
beam - eth all thy bright re - deem - ing light.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise to thee who light dost send!



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!

Text: Martin H. Franzmann, 1907–1976
Music: Fritzel & Co. Thomas J. Williams, 1860–1944
Text © 1969 Concordia Publishing House

SENDING

P Go in peace. God is at work in you.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *A Mighty Fortress*

Church Choir

(Melody and Rhythm As Sung in Luther's Day)

*Special thank you to our Lector, Anne Reese.

This Week's Schedule:

Sunday, October 29th

9:30 am – Sunday School

10:10 am – Church Choir

10:30 am – Worship

11:30 am – Reformation Luncheon

5:00 pm – Adult Handbells

6:00 pm – Church Choir

Monday, October 30th

7:00 pm – Fall Book Club

Wednesday, November 1st

6:00 pm – Youth Handbells

6:45pm – Women's Bible Study

7:00 pm – Chamber Choir