



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 20 **October 26, 2025**
Reformation Sunday

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

Second Lesson: Romans 3:19-28

Now 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. For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom 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; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

The Holy Gospel: John 8:31-38

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” 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’?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour. Amen.

Happy Reformation Sunday. A day Lutherans like to do a little boasting.

This is a day in the liturgical year where we celebrate the protestant reformation. This year we as Lutherans of the ELCIC have changed the tone, from celebrate to commemorate; to which I am pleased because of recent years I have struggled with the notion of celebration. It was pointed out to me during my internship with Pastor Doug Reble that not all people in the pew are celebrating today, not all are Lutherans, not all are Protestants; we do have sisters and brothers of the Roman Catholic faith in our pews too. And so today, we commemorate; we remember.

The texts assigned for today are not exactly in a celebratory sense either. What do they talk about? Sin. What we get on Reformation Day is not a victory parade for the Protestant Reformation, but a lot of talk about sin and law. *"All sin and fall short of the glory of God and all who sin are slaves to sin and that through the law comes knowledge of sin."* Sin, sin, and more sin. Obviously, the people who decide what the readings are for Reformation Sunday didn't get the memo that what we really want to do is celebrate and give ourselves a huge pat on the back; that we, modern Christians are far more clever than those who came before us who naively believed in things like sin and law.

Let's face it – sin is not a popular topic. Even in our Lutheran tradition, there is a trend to move away from using the Confession and Forgiveness of sin; instead using the Thanksgiving for Baptism and Call to Worship as alternatives at the beginning of the service.

Why? Because in an age of high self-esteem, it's a Debbie-downer and people don't want to hear they are sinners. "You are a sinner" can translate for some: "you are a bad immoral person."

Yet, Luther had a way of talking about sin. Sin, according to Luther, is being curved in on self without a thought for God or your neighbour. Sin is missing the mark and it's all the ways we put ourselves in the place of God. It can be passive aggression. It can be the hateful things we think of but never say or it can be that feeling of superiority when we are helping others. Sin is the fact that my ideals and values are never enough to make me always do what I **should**, feel what I **should**, think what I **should**. And those **"shoulds"** are what we call The Law. The **"Shoulds"** in our lives are the things that make us see how far off the mark we are.

No one but ourselves knows just HOW short we fall from the glory of God. But we know; and in those moments alone when again we beat ourselves up or trying to deny it or again making promises of self-improvement; in those solitary moments we know.

Martin Luther knew what it felt like: for the Law to accuse him, leave him with nowhere to rest. And if you want to know what really sparked the Protestant Reformation it is the fact that feeling this way, Luther read that passage we just heard from Romans, *since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift.*

Luther believed this to be true because he believed that God's grace is a gift he no longer accepted what the church had for so long taught; that we are really saved by the works of the Law. The medieval church had pawned off Law as Gospel and Luther dared to

know the difference and then he became a preacher of Grace and that changed everything. But here is the thing: pawning off Law as Gospel isn't a medieval thing and it's not a Catholic thing. It's a human thing and we do it all the time. The church does it, we do it, and society does it. It's like a disease.

Law and Gospel: that's being Lutheran.

My Lutheran Confessions professor, Dr. Bob Kelly, would be popping his buttons off his plaid shirt right now, for at the end of this message I would like you to be able to recognize the difference between Law and Gospel in your life.

You can tell the Law because it is almost always an if-then proposition.

If you follow all the rules in the Bible; then God will love you and you will be happy.

If you lose 20 pounds then you will be worthy to be loved – even healthier!

If you live a perfectly righteous Green eco lifestyle then you will be worthy of taking up space on this planet we call earth.

The Law is always conditional and it is never anything anyone can do perfectly! When we treat Law as Gospel there can never be life and happiness and worthiness. Under the Law there are only two options: pride and despair.

That is why the Gospel is different. The Gospel is not an if-then proposition. The Gospel is a because because because because proposition.

Because God is our creator and because we rebel against the idea of being created beings and insist on trying to be God for ourselves and because God will not play by our rules and because in the fullness of time when God had had quite enough of all of that God became human in Jesus Christ to show us who God really is and because when God came to God's own and we received him not, and because God would not be deterred God went so far as to hang from the cross we built and did not even lift a finger to condemn but said forgive them they know not what they are doing and because Jesus Christ defeated even death and the grave and rose on the third day and because we all sin and fall short and are forever turned in on ourselves and forget that we belong to God and that none of our success guarantee this and none of our failures exclude this and because God came to save and not to judge and therefore..... therefore you are saved by grace as a gift and not by the works of the law and this truth will set you free like no self-help plan or healthy living or any "should" can ever do. That's the Gospel.

My friends in Christ! We as human beings are oh so good with the Law yet the reformation is about the Gospel. The truth will set us free to share the Gospel to others. The Gospel changes people. The Gospel changes the world. The Gospel reforms the church. The church will always be in re-formation because Christ – God is at the centre. With God at the centre nothing;

nothing ever remains the same. God is in the re-creation, the reforming business and so are we and that I can say; is so exciting. Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us.....

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.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

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STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....

Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori, and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

The Thanksgiving Food Drive is over and the final count is 368 items plus pumpkins and gourds, which have been delivered to St. Joseph's Food Bank. Thank you to all who generously shared their blessings with those in need.

Canada Lutheran Magazine subscription renewals for 2026 – Please advise the church office if you would like to renew your subscription. If you do not receive it and would like to, please contact the church office by November 15th. The new rates will be available in early December. For 2025, it was \$19 + tax.

Eternity for Today Devotional Booklets for 2026 – If you are interested in receiving this booklet, please let Pastor Bruce know by November 15th. If you already receive this booklet and want to continue, no further action is required. The congregation's budget covers the cost of these booklets – however, donations via the offering envelope are welcome.



