

Moxham Lutheran Church
500 Park Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902

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Reformation Sunday

Christ Lutheran 9:00 a.m. ✚ Moxham Lutheran 10:30 a.m.

October 26, 2025

While it's tempting on Reformation Sunday to focus on Luther's theology, Luther was primarily concerned with faith and not theological musings. Theologian and author Frederick Buechner talks about the distinction between the two this way: "Theology is reasoned, systematic, and orderly, whereas faith is disorderly, intermittent, and full of surprises." I see some of you nodding your heads – good!

To Buechner, Faith is not about ascribing to this doctrine or that practice; faith is about the stirring of the Spirit within – "our movement *toward the divine*." Buechner's description is an apt one and perhaps particularly encouraging for those of us who embrace the challenge of belonging to a continually reforming tradition such as ours.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Welcome

Prelude

Thanksgiving for Baptism (Luther's Flood Prayer, 1523)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
the fountain of living water,
the rock who gave us birth,
our light and our salvation.

Amen.

The pastor addresses the assembly.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water is poured into the Baptismal Font as we give thanks.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.
Through the waters of the flood, you delivered Noah and his family.
Through the sea, you led your people Israel, from slavery into freedom.
At the river, your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By water and your Word, you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

**We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you
for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.**

**Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives
with your forgiveness, grace, and love.**

To you be given honor and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Gathering Song: “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

verses 1-3 **No. 504**

Greeting

Reformation Day Dialog

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever.

There is one Body and one Spirit;

There is one hope in God's call to us;

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;

One God and Father of all.

Blessed be God who sustains and protects his holy church.

And blessed be God who guides us in our faith.

Amen. Alleluia!

Hymn of Praise

(Verse 4) **No. 504**

**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!

Prayer of the Day

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

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.

The Word of the Lord.

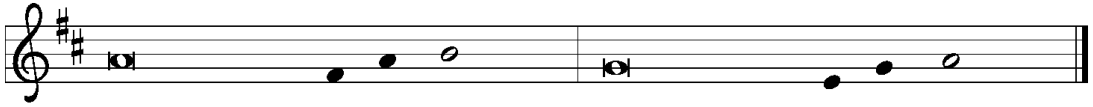
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 46 (*The assembly sings the Refrain*)



⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶ The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.



The Lord of hosts | is with us;

the God of Jacob | is our refuge.

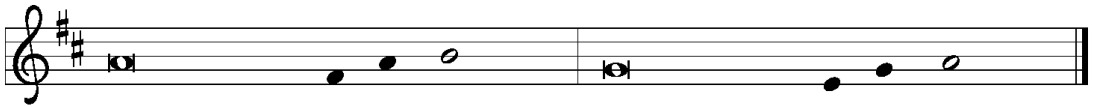
⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸ Come now, regard the works of the Lord,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;

⁹ behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ “Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”

¹¹ The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.



The Lord of hosts | is with us;

the God of Jacob | is our refuge.

Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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.

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 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 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.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: John 8:31-36

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon — Pastor Jim West

Hymn of the Day “The Church of Christ, in Every Age”

No. 729

Nicene Creed

We confess with one another and to our God,
those things we know to be eternally true.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

We kneel or sit to contemplate and join the whole church in prayer.

Prayers of Intercession

Renewed in God's everlasting grace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

Liberating God, free us with your grace, mercy, and love that we may be transformed by your word. Inspire your church to be united in word and deed so that all creation may know the uniting and transforming power of the gospel. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Renewing God, guide those who steward your creation with love and care. Be with those who care for endangered species throughout the world. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Merciful God, awaken us to the power of your love, so that we may advocate for lasting peace that protects the innocents in war-torn Gaza and Ukraine. Unite politicians in our country with a common mission and purpose. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Healing God, be with those experiencing housing or employment insecurity, oppression, or discrimination. Move us to care for those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit (*especially*). God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Life-giving God, you free us by your word. Through your spirit, may we be transformed to live your word of freedom honestly and uprightly in our teaching, preaching, and serving. Prepare the hearts of our delegates for our Synod Assembly so that the election for a new bishop may be in accord with your purpose. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Guiding God, we pray for Christ Lutheran and Moxham Lutheran. Nurture our relationships within these two communities of faith, that we serve and advocate for those who come to us in need. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We offer our prayers, O God, trusting in your everlasting grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Peace

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering Song: “God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

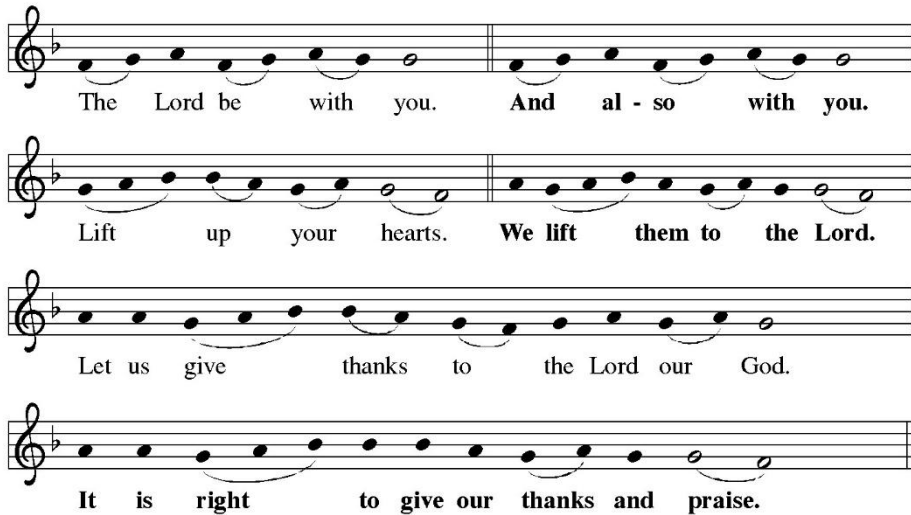
No. 509

**God's word is our great heritage
and shall be ours forever;
to spread its light from age to age
shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way;
in death it is our stay.
Lord, grant while time shall last
your church may hold it fast
throughout all generations.**

Offering Prayer

Lord of the harvest,
we return to you a portion of what you have given to us.
Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches,
but on you, who richly provides for us.
Multiply what we have gathered
to bless all who are suffering and in need,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

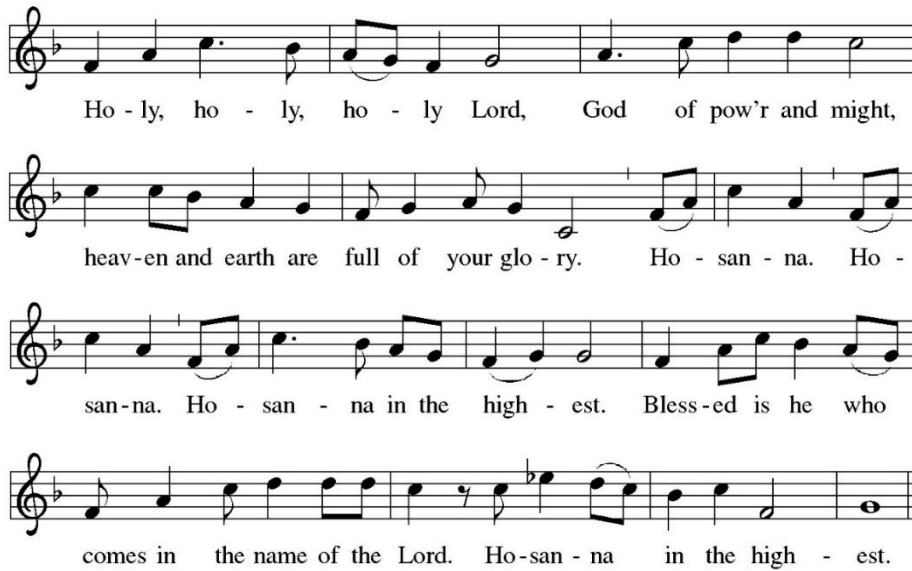
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G-clef and F-sharp key signature. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures, the second and third have two measures each, and the fourth has one measure. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some half notes. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.', 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.', 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

It is indeed right and salutary
that we should at all times and in all places
offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father,
through Christ our Lord;
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 the Church on earth
and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name
and join their unending hymn:



Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God.

The universe declares your praise:

beyond the stars . . . beneath the sea . . . within each cell . . . with every breath.

We praise you, O God.

Generations bless your faithfulness:

through the water . . . by night and day . . . across the wilderness . . .

out of exile . . . into the future.

We bless you, O God.

We give you thanks for your dear Son:

at the heart of human life . . . near to those who suffer . . .

beside the sinner . . . among the poor . . . with us now.

We thank you, O God.

Words of Institution

Remembering his love for us in his suffering, death, and resurrection,
and now at his table we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We pray for the gift of your Spirit:

in our gathering . . . within this meal . . .

among your people . . . throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God,
through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit,
in your church, without end.

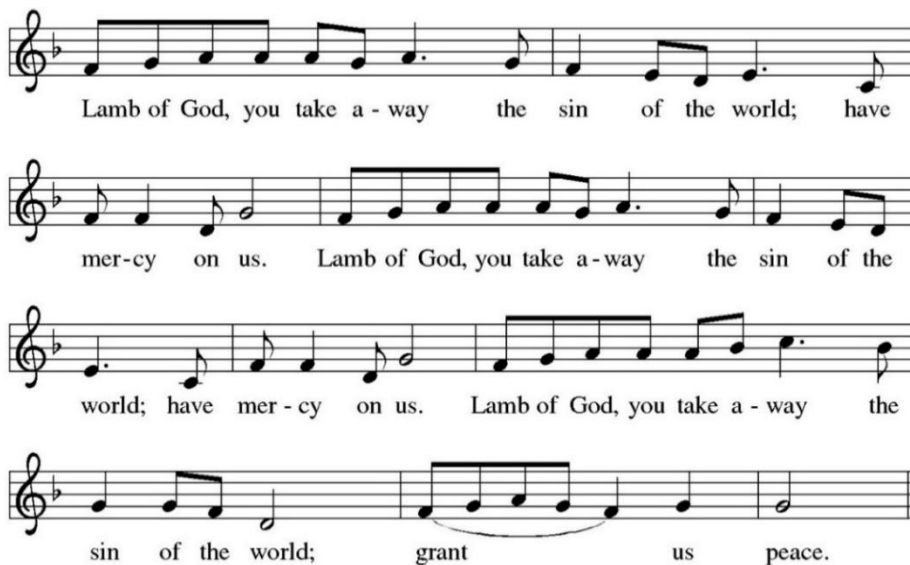
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Communion

In Christ, we are healed and made whole.

Lamb of God



Prayer after Communion

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The God of righteousness,
who gives justice to the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry,
who sets the prisoners free,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: “The Church’s One Foundation”

No. 654

Dismissal

Go in peace. Do not lose heart.
Thanks be to God.

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