

*Continue  
in my word*

JOHN 8:31

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: [st.paulsyork@comcast.net](mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net)

[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

[www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com](http://www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com)

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

**WELCOME** Thank you for being with us.

**We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition** (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 188 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

**Offerings** Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org) or use the QR Code provided.



**Restrooms** are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery which is accessed through the double doors front right.

**The Nursery** is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

Lutheran Church in York, PA - St. Paul's Lutheran...

[stpaulsyork.org](http://stpaulsyork.org)

**An AED/Defibrillator** unit is located in the Good Shepherd room. It is placed on the wall left side of the Springettsbury door exit.

**Parents**, please do accompany your child to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.

**BULLETIN AND NEWSLETTER EMAIL ISSUES:** Due to restrictions being put on the number of recipients we can email at one time and the size of the email itself we are no longer able to send out the weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter via email. If you would like to see a copy of the bulletin please go to our website [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org) and click on "Bulletins" and "Newsletter" in the upper right hand corner.

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	<a href="mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net">st.paulsyork@comcast.net</a>
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Preschool Director	Deb Becker	<a href="mailto:director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com">director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com</a>

**Reformation Sunday**  
**October 27, 2024**  
**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**  
*Musical Setting #4 Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

**PRELUDE**

*All Creatures of Our God and King*

Frank Speller

*Stand turning to face the baptismal font*

**CONFESSION**

In the name of the Father and of the ✙ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**8:00 AM** *Continues with the Apostolic Greeting & Hymn of Praise*



10:30 AM

HYMN

*In the Midst of Earthly Life (ACS 1026)*

Cantor  
Choir  
Congregation  
with organ



1 In the midst of earth - ly life fear and death be - set us;  
2 In the midst of death's dark vale, shade and still af - fright us;  
3 In the midst of deep de - spair, bane and bat - tle taunt us;



who at - tends and hears our cry, who does not for - get us?  
who will light us through the pale, com - fort us and guide us?  
is there not a ref - uge, where ter - ror can - not haunt us?



You on - ly, God, you on - ly. In you our fore - bears put their trust,  
You on - ly, God, you on - ly. To you our fore - bears cried in need;  
In you, O Christ, you on - ly, with glo - ry from God's lov - ing face,



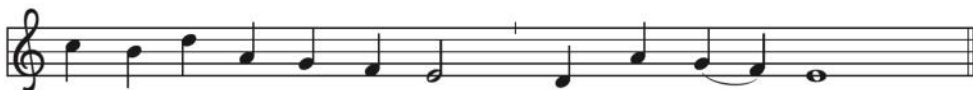
hoped in you and were not crushed. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!  
you, God, were their light in - deed. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!  
and the Spir - it's peace - ful ways. Ho - ly and righ - teous God!



Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful  
Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful  
Ho - ly and might - y God! Ho - ly and all - mer - ci - ful



Sav - ior! Ev - er - last - ing God! Though death would tor - ment us,  
Sav - ior! Ev - er - last - ing God! Though de - spair would smite us,  
Sav - ior! Ev - er - last - ing God! Though the grave would daunt us,



let us not sink in the dust. Lord, have mer - cy.  
let us not its shad - ow heed. Lord, have mer - cy.  
safe we shel - ter in your gaze. Lord, have mer - cy.

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

## HYMN OF PRAISE



1 All glo - ry be to God on high, who has the world be -  
2 O Fa - ther, for your lord - ship true we give you praise and  
3 Lord Je - sus Christ, the on - ly Son of God, cre - a - tion's  
4 O Ho - ly Spir - it, per - fect gift, who brings us con - so -



friend - ed; to us no harm shall now come nigh, the  
hon - or; we wor - ship you; we trust in you; we  
au - thor, re - deem - er of your wan - d'ring ones, and  
la - tion: to men and wom - en saved by Christ as -



strife at last is end - ed. God shows good - will to  
give you thanks for - ev - er. Your will is per - fect,  
source of all true plea - sure; O Lamb of God, O  
sure your in - spi - ra - tion. Through sick - ness, need, and



one and all, and peace when trou - bled sin - ners call. Thank  
and your might re - lent - less - ly con - firms the right; your  
Lord di - vine, con - form our lives to your de - sign, and  
bit - ter death, grant us your warm, life - giv - ing breath; our



God for grace and mer - cy!  
lord - ship is our bless - ing.  
on us all have mer - cy.  
lives are in your keep - ing. A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . Almighty God, gracious Lord, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your Word, protect and comfort them in all temptations, defend them against all their enemies, and bestow on the Church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever **Amen.**

*Sit*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

### FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34     *back page*

### PSALM

#### Psalm 46

*spoken antiphonally men odd verses, women even verses*

<sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
a very present | help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> **Therefore we will not fear, though the | earth be moved,\***  
**and though the mountains be toppled into the depths | of the sea;**

<sup>3</sup> though its waters | rage and foam,\*  
and though the mountains tremble | at its tumult.

<sup>4</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**

<sup>5</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of | the Most High.

<sup>6</sup> **God is in the midst of her; she shall not be | overthrown;\***  
**God shall help her at the | break of day.**

<sup>7</sup> The nations make much ado, and the king- | doms are shaken;\*,  
God has spoken, and the earth shall | melt away.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**

<sup>9</sup> Come now and look upon the works | of the LORD,\*  
what awesome things he has | done on earth.

<sup>10</sup> **It is he who makes war to cease in | all the world;\***  
**he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the | shields with fire.**

<sup>11</sup> "Be still, then, and know that | I am God;\*,  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted | in the earth."

<sup>12</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**

### SECOND READING

Romans 3:19-28

*back page*

*Stand*

VERSE

*Sung by all*



**HOLY GOSPEL**

John 8:31-36

*back page*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.***At the conclusion of the Gospel.***Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Sit***SERMON**

Pastor Reep

**HYMN OF THE DAY*****A Mighty Fortress is Our God (LBW 229)***

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,



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!

*Stand*

## NICENE CREED

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;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin  
Mary, and was made man.

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.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He 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

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

*A brief silence.*

Lord of all, open wide the paths toward unity between denominations so that all followers of your son may join in shared worship and mission. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Instill in your people a mission of preservation and appreciation for trees, animals, and waterways. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Reform the hearts of those who occupy seats of power be reformed so that peace becomes the center of our life together. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Comfort all who are sick, suffering, or grieving in our own community and beyond (*especially*). Surround them with the promise of your love, and grace. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**



Challenge us to be ever reforming in our ministries and outreach. Inspire creative ideas among us so that the communal, grace-filled word of God remains at the heart of our ministry. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Almighty God, in Christ's resurrection you ensure that though life be wrenched away, death cannot win the day. May the truth of your saving grace through faith sustain our hope for life in you. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the saving grace you freely give, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

*The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

*Sit*

## OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

8:00 AM Lord, You I Love with All My Heart

Paul Manz

10:30 AM Chancel Choir

*Speak Lord*

Tom Trenney

Erin Lippard, Soprano soloist

*Stand*

## OFFERTORY

The musical score is written for a choir or congregation. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the treble staff of each system.

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! A-men.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful Father,  
**we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## **DIALOGUE**                      *Sung by Pastor and congregation*

The Lord be with you.            **And also 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 him thanks and praise.**

## **THANKSGIVING**

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you.

Through him you created all things, and in him you take delight.

He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.

He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary.

It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:

Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This is my blood poured out for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we lift this bread and cup before you, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church both now and forever. **Amen**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

## **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, forever and ever. Amen**

**FRACTION RITE** *a brief silence is kept*

**AGNUS DEI** *Sung by all.*

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.

*Sit*

### **COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL**

Holy Communion at St. Paul's Church is "open" to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

*Procedure for receiving Communion:*

- 1. Come to communion using the center aisle.*
- 2. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.*
- 3. Take your place along the chancel step.*
- 4. The ministers will bring the host and wine to you.*
- 5. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.*
- 6. Return to your pew using the side aisle.*

## COMMUNION HYMN

### *Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior (ACS 963)*



1 Je - sus Christ, our bless - ed Sav - ior,  
2 Christ says, "Come, that you may ev - er  
3 This be - lieve with faith un - shak - en:  
4 Christ says, "Come to me, you wea - ry;  
5 Nour - ished, go to thank - ful la - bor,



took our sin a - way for - ev - er,  
here re - mem - ber God's great fa - vor.  
Je - sus' meal is to be ta - ken  
all your bur - dens I will car - ry.  
bear - ing fruit in love for neigh - bor.



bear - ing bit - ter grief and pain,  
Take this bread, my bod - y; dine,  
by all those with hearts dis - tressed,  
There is noth - ing you can do  
Those you serve can taste from you



free - dom from death for us to gain.  
My blood I give for you in wine."  
by all who yearn for peace and rest.  
to earn this mer - cy; take it new."  
what won - ders God in love will do.

### *Stand*

## POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

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; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

# BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Bless you now and forever. **Amen**

# HYMN      *God's Word is Our Great Heritage (ELW 509)*

God's word is    our great her - i - tage    and shall be ours for - ev - er;

to spread its    light from age to age    shall be our chief en - deav - or.

Through life it    guides our way;    in death it    is our stay.    Lord, grant while

time shall last    your church may hold it fast    through-out all gen - er - a - tions.

# DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.      **Thanks be to God.**

# POSTLUDE      *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*      David Johnson

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*We thank Allison and Isabella Lehr for playing flute at the 10:30 AM Liturgy.*

# Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Live stream	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Guild	Acolyte
10/27	8:00 AM	Jennifer Ports	Ken Hinkle	Ann Ulrich		Mike & Linda Hanson	Team 3E: Sammy Barnes, Norma Shue, Cliff Beck, Sheridan Palmer	Kathleen Lemke, Pat Scarborough	Gwendolyn Bastian, Harrison Palmer
	10:30 AM	Janet Fitch	Tonya Cave	George Fitch	Allen Reep	Peter & Nancy O'Connor	Team 3L: Dan Garber, Joe Guarriello, Larry Becker	Ann Anstadt, Jill Streibig	Gwendolyn Lehr, Ephraim Lipp



## This Week at St. Paul's

### Sunday, October 27 Reformation Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live-Stream  
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Christ Hall

### Monday, October 28

6:00 PM Christian Ed Mtg—Youth Room  
7:00 PM Mutual Ministry

### Tuesday, October 29

9:30 AM NO Pantry  
6:00 PM Create—Preschool thru Grade 6

### Wednesday, October 30

10:30 AM Bible Study—Christ Hall

### Saturday, November 2

10:00 AM Preschool Fall Fest

### Sunday, November 3 All Saints Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist—Blessing of Paraments  
9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live-Stream  
11:30 AM Women's Group—Christ Hall  
2:00—5:30 PM York Music Teacher's Recital—Nave  
& Choir Rm  
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Room

*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
By Kirsten and Sammy Barnes*



### The Flower sign up sheet is now open for 2025.

Please sign up on the sheet on the Springettsbury entrance bulletin board and fill out the sentiment sheet. One vase is \$35.00

### We Want to Hear from You

A small committee of church leaders has been established by the Church Council to research the pastoral needs of our congregation. The committee will conduct research through surveys, focus groups, and interviews to best understand what our congregation needs from our pastoral staff.

We need your help! A comprehensive survey of pastoral needs will be distributed in the church bulletin and online today. Please plan to complete the survey electronically or on paper. Here is a link to the survey: <https://forms.gle/kuXXXMPQEEiZuZeX6> that you can also access through St. Paul's website.

Paper copies can be returned to the box in the Good Shepherd Room. Surveys can be completed anonymously, and results will be shared with the church council to complete a ministry site profile when a call for a new pastor is necessary. **The survey will close on Friday, November 8.**

**St Paul's is collecting clothing for Union Lutheran Church's Clothing Ministry** and your help is requested. Union collects 'gently used' clothing (and shoes) for its clothing closet and offers it **free of charge** to needy families in the York City community. A bin has been placed in the Good Shepherd room to collect any clothing you would like to donate. These donations will surely be a blessing to our neighbors. Union's volunteers are very appreciative of our cooperation and our help. If you have large donations you may take them directly to Union Lutheran Church. Simply call them to arrange a time.

## **Adult Education Continues this fall Christ Hall**

Sunday morning adult education is offered at 9:15 AM in Christ Hall. The next session “Living the Catechism” draws upon Luther’s Small Catechism. It will be led by Pastor Snyder.

**Music and Create**—Age 3 through Grade 6—Tuesday evenings 6:00 PM—7:15 PM  
We provide this opportunity for our families with young children to engage in music and art while also having the opportunity to connect with other families. The program is designed for children ages 3 through grade 6. We divide the children into two age groups, age 3 through grade 1 and grade 2 through grade 6.

**Hurricane Relief Offerings** to help meet needs with Hurricane Helene and Milton should be placed in a special offering envelope and marked “Hurricane Relief”. All donations will be given to the ELCA Donations for Disaster Response Fund.

**Food Pantry Needs:** Plastic and paper grocery bags. Peanut butter.

Monetary donations can be placed in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”.

Volunteers on: Tuesday (distribution day), Thursdays (food delivery days) and some Sundays (pantry stocking days) Contact Teresa Rohrbaugh, Patty Snyder, Ken Hinkle, or the church office (717-843-8155) with questions.

The “Pantry Grocery Cart” in the Good Shepherd Room is for bags and food donations

**St. Paul’s Dinner Groups- A time for fellowship, food, and fun**—Dinner Groups will be gathering in January and February. They are comprised of about 6-8 people who gather at the homes of church members and share appetizers, main course, and dessert. The focus is getting better acquainted with people of St. Paul’s. The sign-up sheet will be posted in the Good Shepherd Room. Last day of sign-up is November 17th.

## **Fall House Cleaning—Property Committee invites you to take part Saturday, November 16, 8:00 – 11:00 AM**

The Property Committee invites you to join them with a fall house cleaning on Saturday, November 16, from 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM. In three hours’ time we should be able to give the main level of the church building a good cleaning. There are many jobs to be done. The committee will prepare jobs to be accomplished on 3X5 cards and place them on the table in the Good Shepard Room on Sunday November 10 (the Sunday preceding the cleaning). If you wish to bring your favorite supplies in order to complete the task you have selected, please feel free to do so. Know that materials and supplies will be available on the fall cleaning day. Also, please feel free to let one of the property committee members know if you plan to lend a hand. Current Committee members are: Kem Vaught, Jeff Riese, Larry Becker, Sammy Barnes, Ted Weikert, and Stan Reep. If there are 30 volunteers we will accomplish 90 hours of work! And our building will be ready to greet worshippers. During the Advent/Christmas season.

## Reformation B, 2024

**Jeremiah 31:31-34,      Romans 3:19-28,      St. John 8:31-36**

Monopoly was played with such regularity that it didn't make sense for us to clean up the game pieces, put away all of the green houses, red hotels, organize the colorful paper money into piles of like denominations, and put the game board back into the Parker Brothers box. We played it often. While leaving the game strewn across the bedroom floor seemed logical to us, our mother thought differently. She did not want game pieces, green houses, red hotels, colorful paper money, and the game board scattered on the bedroom floor!

In those days we spent hours passing "Go" and collecting \$200. Not certain if we actually played by the rules, but landing on "Free Parking" permitted you to scoop up any cash that had been placed on the center of the board from the electric and water company bills. "Free Parking" was also a good deal when you found yourself cash strapped and in need of a rent free place to land when the dice stopped rolling. That place, on the opposite corner from "Go" and the joy of collecting \$200, was a stop along the way that made you feel free, at least free until your next turn. Free from landing on the railroads. Free from property groups developed with houses and hotels. Free from rents which were not possible to pay on a Baltic Avenue income. Each time you would make it around the board with your tiny little iron, wheel barrow, top hat, or roadster, there was a sense of relief that you had escaped the doom of being found lacking. Lacking in financial resource, not having any of the golden rod colored \$500s. Lacking in strategy, having purchased what seemed like the wrong real estate. Lacking in luck, double digits seemed to always prevail when it was time to calculate the water bill. So on those days playing Monopoly, I was wanting to be free, park free, land my marker free from exorbitant rents, free from bad choices, free from "Go directly to jail do not pass Go, do not collect \$200!"

"Free" had one connotation as it applied to Monopoly when I was a kid; this morning "free" is something that we encounter with Jesus as he communicates to the religious establishment. Free is something that Jesus communicates to us through his word and holy sacraments. Free is something that Jesus wants us to know, experience, and live into as his disciples, sons and daughters, heirs of salvation. *If you continue in my word you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*

But free can carry the connotation of cheap or not having value. Items placed on the curb bearing a sign indicating to those passing by that an item is no longer needed or wanted. Free sometimes comes with the notion that there is a catch or a belated obligation. The advertising world is keen on this with things like interest rates and the need to purchase something at full price to receive the second item free, which is of course nothing more than both items being half price. And that free year of no interest really isn't so free when year two rolls around and the interest rate charged is more than double what you anticipated. That's worse than Board Walk with a hotel!

Free. It is what God did for the people of Israel in Egypt under the Pharaoh as referenced in the first reading *I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt* and in the second reading *in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed* and in the gospel reading with the retort of the religious elite *we have never been slaves to anyone!* Free. It is what Paul wrote to the Romans explaining what God does for humanity in

Jesus. How God in Christ Jesus justifies us by his grace as gift through faith. Better than free parking with a whole pile of multicolored bills! Free. It is what is promised for continuing in the word. Free from sin. Free from death. Free to live. Free to serve. Free to love. Free. It is what is promised to us in the word and water of Holy Baptism. It is what Martin Luther in the 16<sup>th</sup> century communicated to anyone who would listen.

For those of us who have been around for a while, those of us who seem to know the game, the strategies, the game pieces and the community chance cards that periodically pop up, the continuing isn't always easy. The continuing in the word is often thwarted by those who order their lives by another word, play the game with different rules. You are playing Monopoly and they are reading the rules from inside the lid of Clue.

Sometimes we find ourselves being mocked, made fun of, or belittled as ones who bear the cross of Christ on our brow. The continuing isn't always pleasant. Even now, at this very moment there are individuals, men and women and children who are suffering for their Christian convictions, beliefs, and values. We pray for those who are persecuted for the faith. This is a different kind of freedom, living life fully convinced that Christ Jesus has set them free, has set us free, with baptism's forgiveness, deliverance, and promise. We live all our days, the cold wet gloomy dark days, and the warm dry clear bright days, free. Free from sin. Free from death. Free to live. Free to serve. Free to love. Free.

It is what each of us received in the word and water of Holy Baptism. It is what Martin Luther proclaimed 507 years ago to ordinary people who were being sold indulgences, slips of paper announcing forgiveness of sins by the religious elite, when God had made them free through the life death and resurrection of his Son! "Free Parking" really helped in those days of playing Monopoly. Made free through Christ Jesus helps us as move along in daily life and living; with him it is not the opposite corner where there is joy, but in the freedom that he gives not just in this moment, or for today, but for eternity. In him we are not found lacking but are given all that is needed to put us right with God. In Christ we escape the doom of being found lacking, because of his willingness to suffer death on a cross, to suffer and die and to be raised up by the Father.

As mature members of the family of faith we shouldn't be lax in teaching the newly baptized, the children and youth the basic layout of Christian faith. Maybe we can glean something from teaching someone to play a game like Monopoly; not only the layout of the board but some strategies for staying in the game. That's what Martin Luther did during the days of the reformation. I think we can be of great help, identifying what is most valued and how to keep those new to the faith and those of us who are well seasoned moving forward in the freedom of Christ's out poured love. The structure of the liturgy, the components of the catechism, daily prayer, how to navigate the Bible these are just a few things that come to mind. This is a place where we are free, free to make mistakes, free from human judgment, free from the things that pile up and weigh us down, free from unrealistic expectations. In the presence of Christ we are free; not for a while, or until the next turn and roll of the dice, or until we draw a lousy card that sets us back, but always free in Christ Jesus. *So, if the Son makes you free, your will be free indeed.* Amen.

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It 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. <sup>33</sup>But 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. <sup>34</sup>No 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.

**Psalms 46****SECOND READING: 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. <sup>20</sup>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.

<sup>21</sup>But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, <sup>22</sup>the righteousness

of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>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; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

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

**GOSPEL: John 8:31-36**

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

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