

## First St. John Lutheran Church

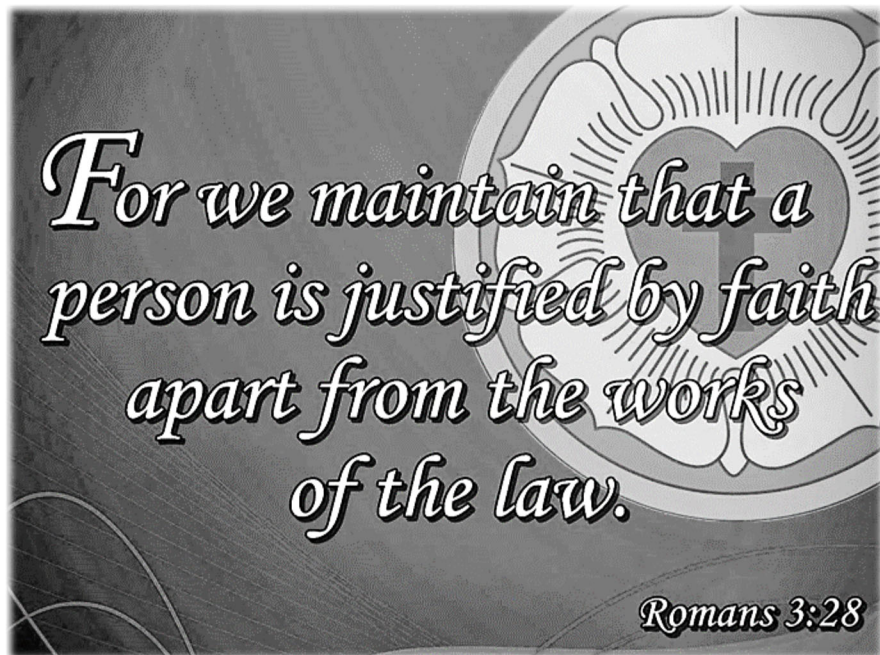
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director  
Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist  
Toni Wilbarger - Secretary



*Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community*

**October 25, 2020**

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**Reformation Sunday**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our reopening guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

We will have corporate singing and verbal liturgy responses, as long as we keep our masks on. Dr. Tony and Annette Slater will still provide music. Liturgy and lessons will be projected on the screen. The service will be recorded and published to the website. Future plans are to "live stream" the service.

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Prelude  
Ringing of the Bell                    *(Please stay seated)*

Dr. Pattin

Praise Song                            *“10,000 Reasons”*

### **Liturgy of Holy Baptism**

#### **Presentation of Candidate**

*P: In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.*

*P: Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to have Vincent Anthony and Luca Paul Donofrio baptized into Christ?*

*Parents: I do.*

**Address to the Families** – *(Pastor, Parents, Sponsors, & Congregation. This concludes with the pastor addressing the congregation:)*

*P: People of God, do you promise to support Vincent Anthony and Luca Paul and pray for them in their new life in Christ?*

**C: We do.**

**Profession of Faith** – *(Pastor, Parents, & Congregation)*

*P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.*

*P: Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?  
Response: I renounce them.*

*P: Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?  
Response: I renounce them..*

*P: Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?  
Response: I renounce them.*

*(The congregation joins in the Creed:)*

*P: Do you believe in God the Father?*

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.**

*P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?*

**C: 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.**

*P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?*

**C: 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.**

**Thanksgiving at the Font** – *(Pastor)*

*P: The Lord be with you.*

**C: And also with you.**

*P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

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

*P: We give you thanks, O God . . .*

**Baptism** – *(Pastor, Family & Candidate)*

**Signing and Sealing** – *(Pastor)*

**Welcome (please stand)** – *(Pastor & Congregation)*

*P: Let us welcome the newly baptized.*

**C: We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

*(The service continues with the pastor at the altar.)*

## Invocation

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.**

## 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.**

*(Please be seated.)*

## Announcements

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

*In contrast to Judah's sin, which Jeremiah describes as "engraved on the tablet of their hearts" (17:1), the prophet envisions a day when the law will be written "on their hearts" (31:33). To know God in this way is to have a direct and profound connection to Him. Forgiveness of sins, which is so complete as to be forgotten, is the motivating force for keeping the law.*

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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 46**

*The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Ps. 46:4)*

God is our refuge 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 city 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 kingdoms 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**

*Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders believed the heart of the gospel was found in these words Paul wrote to the Romans. All people have sinned, but God offers forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus. We are justified, or put right with God, through faith in Jesus.*

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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Acclamation (please stand) (led by Annette Slater)**

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,*

*Open to the seed of your word.*

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,*

*Where love can grow and peace is understood. (Repeat)*

## Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 8.

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

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

*True freedom is not related to ethnic distinctions or social class. Only Jesus can free us from slavery to sin, and he does this through the truth of the gospel.*

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."

### Gospel Response (Spoken)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

*(led by Annette Slater)*

### Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Lord, in your mercy.

C: **Hear our prayer.**

The Offering *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

### Musical Offertory

Cheri Sergent, handbells

*(Please stand)*

### Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. Merciful God, you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

### The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

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

P: 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. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

P: 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.

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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

P: 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. Amen.

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

### **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.

### **Invitation to Communion**

P: Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.

**C: Our Lord's body and blood, let us take together.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **The Communion** *(distribution will be continuous)*

*If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.*

*"All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."*

**Communion Hymns** - During the distribution of Communion the following hymns will be led by the Annette:

*"I Received the Living God"  
"For the Bread Which You Have Broken"*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

**C: Amen.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: Jesus Christ, host of this meal, you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore.

**C: Amen.**

### **The Blessing**

P: May God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, grant you the gifts of faith and hope. Almighty God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Closing Hymn      *"O Word of God Incarnate"*  
*(led by Annette Slater)*

Postlude      Dr. Pattin

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## ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE***

### **ELDERS**

Jeff Ladd, Jeff Smith

### **HYMN LEADER**

Annette Slater

### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

Cheri Sergent

### **SOUND BOARD**

Dave Wilbarger

## Gift Receipt

Some gifts can be hard to receive. In today's second reading Paul speaks of such a gift. He says that we are "justified by God's grace as a gift." Is that good news? Absolutely! But it is good news that runs counter to our experience and expectations. Most of us prefer to earn our own way in the world. We work hard, take pride in our accomplishments, and relish our hard-won victories. When we get ourselves into trouble, we feel like we should work things out by ourselves. How else can we redeem ourselves in our own and others' eyes?

To accept God's gift of justification--the good news that we are freed and forgiven--means acknowledging two painful realities. First, we must admit that we *need* this gift because we mess up continually. Second, we need to recognize that there is nothing we can do to make things right again. That hurts!

The good news begins to feel like good news once we realize that this gift of justification flows from God's gracious heart. God solves our dilemma without saying "I told you so!" or "See what a mess you made?" or even giving us "the look." God loves us, sins and all. And God is always ready to rescue sinners from the messes they have gotten themselves into.

Once we begin to accept this gift--once we are justified by God's gracious heart made known in Jesus--we are righteous in a new way. God is changing us from the inside out. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are freed from the addictive loop of trying harder and failing again. We are freed from having to redeem ourselves. God's free gift can be hard to take, but when we begin to trust God's gracious love we become sinners-in-truth who have begun a life of continuing reformation.