Reformation Day Worship Service



Sunday, November 1, 2026
5:30pm

What Is Reformation Day?

by Dr. Stephen Nichols

A single event on a single day changed the world. It was October 31, 1517. Brother Martin, a monk and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. He had been greatly disturbed by an unprecedented indulgence sale. The story has all the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Let's meet the cast.

First, there is the young bishop — too young by church laws — Albert of Mainz. Not only was he bishop over two bishoprics, he desired an additional archbishopric over Mainz. This, too, was against church laws. So Albert appealed to the pope in Rome, Leo X. From the De Medici family, Leo X greedily allowed his tastes to exceed his financial resources. Enter the artists and sculptors, Raphael and Michelangelo.

When Albert of Mainz appealed for a papal dispensation, Leo X was ready to deal. Albert, with the papal blessing, would sell indulgences for past, present, and future sins. All of this sickened the monk Martin Luther. Can we buy our way into heaven? Luther had to speak out.

But why October 31? November 1 held a special place in the church calendar as All Saints' Day. On November 1, 1517, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther's home city. Pilgrims would come from all over, genuflect before the relics, and take hundreds, if not thousands, of years of time in purgatory. Luther's soul grew even more vexed. None of this seemed right.

Martin Luther, a scholar, took quill in hand, dipped it in his inkwell and penned his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, to stir some soul-searching among his fellow brothers in the church. The Ninety-Five Theses sparked far more than a debate. The Ninety-Five Theses also revealed the church was far beyond rehabilitation. It needed a reformation. The church — and the world — would never be the same.

One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, "The Church's true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ." That alone is the meaning of Reformation Day. The church had lost sight of the gospel because it had long ago papered over the pages of God's Word with layer upon layer of tradition. Mere tradition often brings about systems of works, of earning your way back to God. It was true of the Pharisees, and it was true of medieval Roman Catholicism. Didn't Christ Himself say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light"? Reformation Day celebrates the joyful beauty of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is Reformation Day? It is the day the light of the gospel broke forth out of darkness. It was the day that began the Protestant Reformation. It was a day that led to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and many other Reformers helping the church find its way back to God's Word as the only supreme authority for faith and life and leading the church back to the glorious doctrines of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It kindled the fires of missionary endeavors, it led to hymn writing and congregational singing, and it led to the centrality of the sermon and preaching for the people of God. It is the celebration of a theological, ecclesiastical, and cultural transformation.

So we celebrate Reformation Day. This day reminds us to be thankful for our past and to the monk-turned-Reformer. What's more, this day reminds us of our duty, our obligation, to keep the light of the gospel at the center of all we do.

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www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-is-reformation-day

Bringing God's Word and its announcement of hope in Jesus will be **Rev. Eric Landry**, senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church. He is also the chief content officer of Sola Media and former executive editor of Modern Reformation. With Michael Horton, he is the coeditor of *"The Reformation Then and Now"* (Hendrickson, 2017) and *"Defending the Faith"* (CreateSpace, 2018). Eric and his wife Sarah are the parents of two young adult children and live in Austin, Texas.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

CALL TO WORSHIP *Psalm 124:8*

LEADER: Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PSALM

Psalm 42:1–2, 6–8, 11 "As Pants the Hart" *Songbook*

**As pants the hart for streams of living water,
So longs my soul, O living God, for Thee;
I thirst for Thee, for Thee my heart is yearning;
When shall I come Thy gracious face to see?**

**O Lord my God, o'erwhelmed in deep affliction,
Far from Thy rest, to Thee I lift my soul;
Deep calls to deep and storms of trouble thunder,
While o'er my head the waves and billows roll.**

**Thou wilt command Thy servant's consolation,
Thy lovingkindness yet shall cheer my day,
And in the night Thy song shall be my comfort;
God of my life, to Thee I still will pray.**

**Why, O my soul, art thou cast down within me,
Why art thou troubled and oppressed with grief?
Hope thou in God, the God of thy salvation,
Hope, and thy God will surely send relief.**

Words from Psalm 42. Music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1835).
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SUMMONS TO REPENTANCE *Matthew 5:17–20*

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

CONFESSING OUR SIN

from the Genevan church order of worship

Lord God, eternal and Almighty Father, we confess and acknowledge without pretense before your Holy Majesty, that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption; prone to do what is evil, incapable of any good; and that in our depravity, we endlessly transgress your holy commandments. And so, in your just judgment, we deserve ruin and damnation. But Lord, we are displeased with ourselves for having offended you, and we condemn ourselves and our vices with true repentance, longing for your grace to relieve our distress.

May you, therefore, have mercy upon us, most gentle and merciful God and Father, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And as you blot out our vices and blemishes, extend and increase the graces of your Holy Spirit to us day by day, so that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with all our heart, we might feel the sorrow that gives birth to true penitence, which as we mortify our sins may produce fruits of righteousness and innocence pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 8:1–2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

PSALM

Psalm 51:1–15 "God, Be Merciful to Me" *Hymn #486*

God, be merciful to me,
on thy grace I rest my plea;
plenteous in compassion thou,
blot out my transgressions now;
wash me, make me pure within,
cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions I confess,
grief and guilt my soul oppress;
I have sinned against thy grace
and provoked thee to thy face;
I confess thy judgment just,
speechless, I thy mercy trust.

I am evil, born in sin;
thou desirest truth within.
thou alone my Savior art,
teach thy wisdom to my heart;
make me pure, thy grace bestow,
wash me whiter than the snow.

Broken, humbled to the dust
by thy wrath and judgment just,
let my contrite heart rejoice
and in gladness hear thy voice;
from my sins O hide thy face,
blot them out in boundless grace.

Gracious God, my heart renew,
make my spirit right and true;
cast me not away from thee,
let thy Spirit dwell in me;

thy salvation's joy impart,
steadfast make my willing heart.

Sinners then shall learn from me
and return, O God, to thee;
Savior, all my guilt remove,
and my tongue shall sing thy love;
touch my silent lips, O Lord,
and my mouth shall praise accord.

Words from Psalm 51:1–15; *The Psalter* (1912)
Music by Richard Redhead (1853)
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CONFESSION OF FAITH

French Confession (1559): Articles XII & XIII

XII. We believe that from this corruption and general condemnation in which all men are plunged, God, according to his eternal and immutable counsel, calleth those whom he hath chosen by his goodness and mercy alone in our Lord Jesus Christ, without consideration of their works, to display in them the riches of his mercy; leaving the rest in this same corruption and condemnation to show in them his justice. For the ones are no better than the others, until God discerns them according to his immutable purpose which he has determined in Jesus Christ before the creation of the world. Neither can any man gain such a reward by his own virtue, as by nature we can not have a single good feeling, affection, or thought, except God has first put it into our hearts.

XIII. We believe that all that is necessary for our salvation was offered and communicated to us in Jesus Christ. He is given to us for our salvation, and "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption": so that if we refuse him, we renounce the mercy of the Father, in which alone we can find a refuge.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

At the conclusion of the Minister's prayer,
the Congregation shall pray together:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT

2 Timothy 4:1–8

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who
is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his
kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of
season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience
and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not
endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will
accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,
4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off
into myths. 5 But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure
suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and
the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there
is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,
the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only
to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

SERMON

"The Time Has Come"
Rev. Eric Landry

SERMON NOTES

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PSALM

Ps 138 "With Grateful Heart My Thanks I Bring" *Hymn #88*

With grateful heart my thanks I bring,
before the great thy praise I sing:
I worship in thy holy place
and praise thee for thy truth and grace;
for truth and grace together shine
in thy most holy word divine.

I cried to thee and thou didst save,
thy word of grace new courage gave;
the kings of earth shall thank thee, Lord,
for they have heard thy wondrous word;
yea, they shall come with songs of praise,
for great and glorious are thy ways.

O Lord, enthroned in glory bright,
thou reignest in the heav'nly height;
the proud in vain thy favor seek,
but thou hast mercy for the meek;
through trouble though my pathway be,
thou wilt revive and strengthen me.

Thou wilt stretch forth thy mighty arm
to save me when my foes alarm;
the work thou hast for me begun
shall by thy grace be fully done;
Forever mercy dwells with thee;
O Lord, my Maker, think on me.

Words from Psalm 138, *The Psalter* (1912). Music by Dmitri Bortniansky (1825).
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BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24–26

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace. Amen.

PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS FOR SOME LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE.

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