
JUSTIFIED!

A Reformation Worship Series
Celebrating 500 Years Of Faith

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Leader's Guide

JUSTIFIED!

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Celebrating 500 Years Of Faith

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About the Series

This worship series on CD for the five Sundays of October 2017 celebrates the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the weeks leading up to October 31. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. Weekly themes are: the Word, Baptism, the Two Kingdoms, Vocation and Justification.

The CD includes prayers, a homily, a children's sermon, newsletter/bulletin notices and music for each service as well as a CD-ROM (Mac/PC) with the text of the entire kit in .rtf (rich text format), a list of contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of all the services with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Service One Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther.

In the first service leading up to our celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we will praise God for the gift of his Word. Martin Luther said concerning the events of the Reformation that he did nothing. The Word did everything.

Service One Bulletin Notice

Welcome to a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther.

In our service today we give thanks to God for his living and active Word—for the written Word in the pages of Holy Scripture and above all for the Word made flesh, our Savior Jesus Christ.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Service Two Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. In our worship this week we will celebrate God’s gift of Baptism. We live as his sons and daughters, adopted into the household of God. We can speak with confidence the words that Martin Luther used when tempted or afraid: “I am baptized!”

Service Two Bulletin Notice

Welcome to a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. Today we will give thanks for our adoption into God’s family through Holy Baptism. With our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will join the saints and angels in giving praise to our God and Savior.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Service Three Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. In our Reformation service this week we will celebrate our dual citizenship, as citizens of the kingdom of heaven and as citizens of an earthly nation, which exists, as do all earthly governments, by the command of God.

Service Three Bulletin Notice

Welcome to a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. Today we will consider the two kingdoms in which we live, the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of power. We will see that God truly does have “the whole world in his hands.”

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Service Four Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. In our service this week we will consider the work to which God has called us and the works of love and service that we carry out in our various vocations. We live as God’s redeemed people, walking in love as Jesus walked.

Service Four Bulletin Notice

Welcome to a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. Today in our worship we will praise God for our vocations, our various callings in life. In each place and relationship we serve our neighbor, sharing with them the love that God in Christ has shown to us.

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A Reformation Worship Series Celebrating 500 Years Of Faith

Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Service Five Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. In our service this week we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 statements for academic debate to the town bulletin board, the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther, through his study of God’s Word, rediscovered the hidden treasure of the Gospel, the good news that we are justified as a free gift of God’s grace through faith in Christ! Come and celebrate God’s grace and gifts!

Service Five Bulletin Notice

Welcome to a special Reformation worship series, “Justified!” celebrating 500 years of faith. Each service in the series highlights a distinctive aspect of the Reformation theology of Martin Luther. In our service today we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 statements for academic debate to the town bulletin board, the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Luther, through his study of God’s Word, rediscovered the hidden treasure of the Gospel, the good news that we are justified as a free gift of God’s grace through faith in Christ!
Rejoice in the grace and gifts of God!

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Service One: The Word

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Service One: The Word

Order of Service

The Word of the Lord remains forever. 1 Peter 1:25

Opening Hymn..... Werde Munter 87 87 77 88

Speak, O Lord, your servant listens,
Let your Word to me come near;
Newborn life and spirit give me,
Let each promise still my fear.
Death's dread pow'r, its inward strife,
Wars against your Word of life;
Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor
That I cling to you forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near you
And to listen to your voice;
Let me ever love and hear you,
Let your Word be now my choice!
Many hardened sinners, Lord,
Flee in terror at your Word;
But to all who feel sin's burden
You give words of peace and pardon.

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
Let your words in me take root.
May your Spirit e'er be near me
That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing your praise,
From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given
In the endless joy of heaven.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P A voice says, "Cry!"

C And I said, "What shall I cry?"

P The grass withers, the flower fades,

C But the Word of our God will stand forever.

Confession and Absolution

P The Word of our God stands forever, but we do not always follow that Word. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, through the Word of the Gospel you have called us to new life in Christ. Your Word is a light and lamp for us, but we often choose to walk in the darkness of sin. We turn away from your Word to follow our own sinful desires. We turn from your will and listen to the temptations of the world. Have mercy on us and forgive us. Lead us by your Spirit to walk in the light of your Word, to walk in love as Jesus walked.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son Jesus, the Word made flesh, to die for us and for his sake forgives our sins. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C The Word of our God will stand forever!

Prayer of the Day

Hymn Jesus Loves Me 77 77 and refrain

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gates to open wide.
He has washed away my sin,
Lets his little child come in.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Children's Message

Hymn Herr Jesu Christ, Dich Zu Uns Wend LM

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent his Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That we might thus be justified.

It is the pow'r of God to save
From sin and Satan and the grave;
It works the faith which firmly clings
To all the treasures which it brings.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 55:10-13

Epistle Reading 1 Peter 1:22-25

Gospel Reading John 1:1-5, 14

Sermon HymnMunich 76 76 D

O Word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky;
We praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

Sermon: "The Word Did Everything"

Hymn of ResponseMunich 76 76 D

The Church from you, dear Master, received the gift divine;
And still that light is lifted o'er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass that, all life's voyage through,
Mid mists and rocks and quicksands still guides, O Christ, to you.

O make your Church, dear Savior, a lamp of burnished gold
To bear before the nations your true light as of old!
O teach your wand'ring pilgrims by this their path to trace
Till, clouds and darkness ended, they see you face to face!

Offering

Prayers

Each petition ends with the following response:

P Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

Lord's Prayer

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge

the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Holy Communion
(if offered)

Benediction
(Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 13:20-21)

P Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

C **But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.**

P Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn.....St. Flavian CM

Almighty God, your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.

Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.

Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy.

So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know.

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Service One: The Word

Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** of the following image (purchased by you from shutterstock.com) can be shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/open-bible-textured-granite-background-94020058?src=M8v483ruiHyJitlqXdbnMw-1-26>

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken aloud by the pastor to begin the service or is read silently by the congregation before the start of the service:

The Word of the Lord remains forever. 1 Peter 1:25

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Werde Munter 87 87 77 88, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Speak, O Lord, your servant listens,
 Let your Word to me come near;
 Newborn life and spirit give me,
 Let each promise still my fear.
 Death's dread pow'r, its inward strife,
 Wars against your Word of life;
 Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor
 That I cling to you forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near you
 And to listen to your voice;
 Let me ever love and hear you,
 Let your Word be now my choice!
 Many hardened sinners, Lord,
 Flee in terror at your Word;
 But to all who feel sin's burden
 You give words of peace and pardon.

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
 Let your words in me take root.
 May your Spirit e'er be near me
 That I bear abundant fruit.
 May I daily sing your praise,
 From my heart glad anthems raise,
 Till my highest praise is given
 In the endless joy of heaven.

- The **Invocation** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P A voice says, "Cry!"

C And I said, "What shall I cry?"

P The grass withers, the flower fades,

C But the Word of our God will stand forever.

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P The Word of our God stands forever, but we do not always follow that Word. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, through the Word of the Gospel you have called us to new life in Christ. Your Word is a light and lamp for us, but we often choose to walk in the darkness of sin. We turn away from your Word to follow our own sinful desires. We turn from your will and listen to the temptations of the world. Have mercy on us and forgive us. Lead us by your Spirit to walk in the light of your Word, to walk in love as Jesus walked.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son Jesus, the Word made flesh, to die for us and for his sake forgives our sins. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C The Word of our God will stand forever!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor:

P Almighty God, grass withers, flowers fade away, and even this world you created for us, will pass away, but your Word will endure forever. We praise you for the Word of the Gospel, the powerful, life-giving good news of the life, death and resurrection of our Savior. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to trust that Word and to know that all of your promises are answered in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hear our prayer and accept our praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Jesus Loves Me* 77 77 and refrain, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gates to open wide.
He has washed away my sin,
Lets his little child come in.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Have your teachers or your parents ever told you, "Use your words"? That means they don't want you to fight or hurt others. They want you to talk about the problem you are having with a friend or classmate. They want you to use words instead of angry pushing or hitting! Our words might not always work, but it is a good way to try to solve problems.

God uses his words, but his words always work! When God speaks, things happen. When God made the world, he just had to say, "Let there be light," and light appeared in the darkness. He said, "Let the earth grow plants and trees," and plants and trees appeared!

God put his words in the Bible for us. God's Word tells us that he sent his Son Jesus to be our Savior. His Word tells us that whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life. We know that is true because when God speaks, things happen. If he says that everyone who believes in Jesus has eternal life, then that is exactly what will happen! Another name for Jesus is "the Word," and what Jesus says always happens. He always keeps his promises. Jesus died on the cross for us and he rose from the dead. Jesus promises us, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Because Jesus lives, we will live with him forever. It's true, because when Jesus speaks, things happen! Let's pray:

Jesus, we trust your words. Because you live, we will live forever with you. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Herr Jesu Christ, Dich Zu Uns Wend LM, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent his Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That we might thus be justified.

It is the pow'r of God to save
From sin and Satan and the grave;
It works the faith which firmly clings
To all the treasures which it brings.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 55:10-13, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Peter 1:22-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 1:1-5, 14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Munich 76 76 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

O Word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky;
We praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

- The **Sermon: “The Word Did Everything”** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times.” Have you ever used that phrase? Has anyone ever said that to you? Sometimes our words are not very effective, especially when talking to children and pets—and just maybe, sometimes talking to our spouse. Unfortunately, our words can be very effective when we don’t want them to be, when we say something hurtful, or tell a lie or share a bit of gossip. Those kinds of words have an impact on those who hear them, and we can’t call them back. We can be very good at “using our words” in all the wrong ways.

When God uses his words, those words always have an impact. His words always, without fail, accomplish what he wills, what he intends. He called the universe into existence with his words. Unlike an artist who must have paint or canvas or stone and chisel to create, God creates with his Word. He spoke and light appeared. He spoke and dry land appeared and the waters were gathered into the oceans. He spoke and the sun, moon and stars appeared in space. Scripture tells us, “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God compares his words to rain and snow. The rain and snow fall and water the earth, just as God intends, and the crops grow. The rain and snow do what they are supposed to do. They do what God sends them to do. His Word is like that. It accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it.

Jesus, the Word, who was and is God, was sent by the Father to accomplish his purpose, to carry out his will. Jesus did exactly what he was sent here to do, to take our sins onto himself. Long ago, when Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator and ate the fruit forbidden to them, God spoke his word to them, “You shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). That same word speaks to us in our sin, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). All of our sins, all of those misspoken words, all of those intentionally hurtful words, every bit of gossip, every hurtful thought and action, the hate, envy and greed—every bit of it was borne in Jesus’ own body on the cross. For our sins, Jesus the Word made flesh suffered the penalty of death decreed by the Word of God. The Word accomplished all that the Father sent him to do. Then, according to God’s plan and purpose, on the third day after Jesus’ death, God raised his Son to life, exalting him and giving to him, the Word, all authority in heaven and on earth.

The Word of God still has authority. It still accomplishes what it is sent out to do. We now know the Gospel Word, the good news of Jesus. It is a living Word that creates faith by the power of the Spirit. The Gospel is a Word that brings life, just as surely as the rain and snow bring new life and growth to the plants and trees and crops. We have been born anew through the Word of God, born again of the water and the Word in Holy Baptism. Because of what Jesus has done for you, God with his Word declares you not guilty. God speaks through Scripture, through a pastor's word of absolution, through the forgiving words of your brothers and sisters in Christ. God says for the sake of his Son that your sins are forgiven. What God says, happens. Your sins are forgiven, cast so far from God's sight it is as though those sins have been lost forever in the depths of the ocean.

Five hundred years ago, a German monk named Martin Luther wrestled with this living and active Word. Luther wondered, "What does the written Word mean when it speaks of 'the righteousness of God'"? Does it mean that he is the righteous God who punishes sinners, who sends to hell those who don't measure up to his righteousness? In his struggle with the Word, Luther, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to understand that the righteousness of God, a right relationship with God, was a gift of God to unrighteous sinners. It was a gift of grace, God's undeserved favor for sinners. The righteousness of God is a gift for all who believe in Jesus, a gift that is free for us because the price was paid in full by the Savior's blood. It is a gift received by faith, by trust in the Word, trusting that God means what he says, and gives what he promises.

About 20 years before Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the Italian artist Michelangelo carved the *Pieta*, the beautiful marble statue of Mary holding the body of the dead Christ across her lap. In the hands of the brilliant young artist, the carved marble took on the appearance of living flesh, but when the finished statue was put on display, Michelangelo overheard a visitor give credit for his masterpiece to another artist! Rightly outraged, and unwilling to see his work attributed to someone else, Michelangelo took up his chisel again and carved the words in Latin, "Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, made this," onto the sash across Mary's chest. It was the only work he ever signed.

Martin Luther certainly could have taken credit for the events of the Reformation. He struggled to find a merciful God as he wrestled with the language and grammar of Holy Scripture. His 95 theses against indulgences found a popular audience and got the angry attention of church leadership. The reformer's writing, teaching and preaching spread the message of the Gospel across Europe. But Luther himself did not take credit for the events of the Reformation or for the rediscovered truth that we are justified only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He did nothing, Luther said, the Word of God did everything. The Word did everything—in the events of the Reformation and in our salvation. As with Michelangelo's statue, the words that rightly give credit—and all glory and honor—for our salvation might be engraved across each new life in Christ: "The Son of God, the Word made flesh, made this!" We can trust the Word

of God. We can trust that living Word that promises forgiveness and life to us through faith in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Words from our epistle reading today, from 1 Peter 1:25, became a motto of the Reformation. In Latin the phrase is *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*. The initials of that motto, VDMA, were sewn onto clothing, flags and banners and etched into swords and even into the armor of war horses. In English the words are: “The Word of the Lord endures forever.” What is that word of the Lord? What is that eternally enduring Word, the Word from God that we can trust? The apostle Peter answers for us: “This word is the good news that was preached to you.” Amen.

- The **Hymn of Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Munich 76 76 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The Church from you, dear Master, received the gift divine;
And still that light is lifted o'er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass that, all life's voyage through,
Mid mists and rocks and quicksands still guides, O Christ, to you.

O make your Church, dear Savior, a lamp of burnished gold
To bear before the nations your true light as of old!
O teach your wand'ring pilgrims by this their path to trace
Till, clouds and darkness ended, they see you face to face!

- The **Offering** is collected at this time. If desired, this **Mini Movie** (purchased by you from Worship House Media: worshiphousemedia.com) is presented on a screen at this time for reflection:

<http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/64958/the-bible>

- The **Prayers** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

Each petition ends with the following response:

P Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

+

P Heavenly Father, by your Word you created the heavens and the earth. We give you thanks and praise for all of your gifts, especially for the gift of your Word in Holy Scripture. Help us by the power of the Spirit to learn and grow in faith as we study the treasure that is your written

Word. Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

P Heavenly Father, when the time was right, you sent forth your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. He accomplished the purpose for which he was sent and carried our sins in his body to the cross. We give you thanks and praise for the gifts of forgiveness and life that are ours through faith in Jesus' holy name. Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

P Heavenly Father, today we give you thanks and praise for the gift of your servant Martin Luther, and for the truth of the Gospel that was restored to the church by the power of the Holy Spirit through your servant's work. As Martin Luther gave credit to your Word for all that was accomplished in the events of the Reformation, so we too know that in our salvation, the Word did everything. Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

P Amen.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison at this time.
- The **Apostles' Creed** is spoken in unison at this time:

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

- **Holy Communion**, if offered, is celebrated at this time, according to local custom.

- The **Benediction**, from Hebrews 1:1-2 and Hebrews 13:20-21, is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

☐ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

☑ **But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.**

☐ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

☑ **Amen.**

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Flavian CM, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Almighty God, your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.

Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.

Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy.

So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know.

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A Reformation Worship Series
Celebrating 500 Years Of Faith

Service One: The Word

Scripture Readings

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 55:10-13, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Peter 1:22-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 1:1-5, 14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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A Reformation Worship Series Celebrating 500 Years Of Faith

Service One: The Word

Children's Message

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Have your teachers or your parents ever told you, "Use your words"? That means they don't want you to fight or hurt others. They want you to talk about the problem you are having with a friend or classmate. They want you to use words instead of angry pushing or hitting! Our words might not always work, but it is a good way to try to solve problems.

God uses his words, but his words always work! When God speaks, things happen. When God made the world, he just had to say, "Let there be light," and light appeared in the darkness. He said, "Let the earth grow plants and trees," and plants and trees appeared!

God put his words in the Bible for us. God's Word tells us that he sent his Son Jesus to be our Savior. His Word tells us that whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life. We know that is true because when God speaks, things happen. If he says that everyone who believes in Jesus has eternal life, then that is exactly what will happen! Another name for Jesus is "the Word," and what Jesus says always happens. He always keeps his promises. Jesus died on the cross for us and he rose from the dead. Jesus promises us, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Because Jesus lives, we will live with him forever. It's true, because when Jesus speaks, things happen! Let's pray:

Jesus, we trust your words. Because you live, we will live forever with you. Amen.

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Service One: The Word

Sermon

- The **Sermon: “The Word Did Everything”** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times.” Have you ever used that phrase? Has anyone ever said that to you? Sometimes our words are not very effective, especially when talking to children and pets—and just maybe, sometimes talking to our spouse. Unfortunately, our words can be very effective when we don’t want them to be, when we say something hurtful, or tell a lie or share a bit of gossip. Those kinds of words have an impact on those who hear them, and we can’t call them back. We can be very good at “using our words” in all the wrong ways.

When God uses his words, those words always have an impact. His words always, without fail, accomplish what he wills, what he intends. He called the universe into existence with his words. Unlike an artist who must have paint or canvas or stone and chisel to create, God creates with his Word. He spoke and light appeared. He spoke and dry land appeared and the waters were gathered into the oceans. He spoke and the sun, moon and stars appeared in space. Scripture tells us, “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). Speaking through

the prophet Isaiah, God compares his words to rain and snow. The rain and snow fall and water the earth, just as God intends, and the crops grow. The rain and snow do what they are supposed to do. They do what God sends them to do. His Word is like that. It accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it.

Jesus, the Word, who was and is God, was sent by the Father to accomplish his purpose, to carry out his will. Jesus did exactly what he was sent here to do, to take our sins onto himself. Long ago, when Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator and ate the fruit forbidden to them, God spoke his word to them, “You shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). That same word speaks to us in our sin, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). All of our sins, all of those misspoken words, all of those intentionally hurtful words, every bit of gossip, every hurtful thought and action, the hate, envy and greed—every bit of it was borne in Jesus’ own body on the cross. For our sins, Jesus the Word made flesh suffered the penalty of death decreed by the Word of God. The Word accomplished all that the Father sent him to do. Then, according to God’s plan and purpose, on the third day after Jesus’ death, God raised his Son to life, exalting him and giving to him, the Word, all authority in heaven and on earth.

The Word of God still has authority. It still accomplishes what it is sent out to do. We now know the Gospel Word, the good news of Jesus. It is a living Word that creates faith by the power of the Spirit. The Gospel is a Word that brings life, just as surely as the rain and snow bring new life and growth to the plants and trees and crops. We have been born anew through the Word of God, born again of the water and the Word in Holy Baptism. Because of what Jesus has done for you, God with his Word declares you not guilty. God speaks through Scripture, through a pastor’s word of absolution, through the forgiving words of your brothers and sisters in Christ. God says for the sake of his Son that your sins are forgiven. What God says, happens. Your sins are forgiven, cast so far from God’s sight it is as though those sins have been lost forever in the depths of the ocean.

Five hundred years ago, a German monk named Martin Luther wrestled with this living and active Word. Luther wondered, “What does the written Word mean when it speaks of ‘the righteousness of God’”? Does it mean that he is the righteous God who punishes sinners, who sends to hell those who don’t measure up to his righteousness? In his struggle with the Word, Luther, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to understand that the righteousness of God, a right relationship with God, was a gift of God to unrighteous sinners. It was a gift of grace, God’s undeserved favor for sinners. The righteousness of God is a gift for all who believe in Jesus, a gift that is free for us because the price was paid in full by the Savior’s blood. It is a gift received by faith, by trust in the Word, trusting that God means what he says, and gives what he promises.

About 20 years before Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the Italian artist Michelangelo carved the *Pieta*, the beautiful marble statue of Mary holding the body of the dead Christ across her lap. In the hands of the brilliant young

artist, the carved marble took on the appearance of living flesh, but when the finished statue was put on display, Michelangelo overheard a visitor give credit for his masterpiece to another artist! Rightly outraged, and unwilling to see his work attributed to someone else, Michelangelo took up his chisel again and carved the words in Latin, “Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, made this,” onto the sash across Mary’s chest. It was the only work he ever signed.

Martin Luther certainly could have taken credit for the events of the Reformation. He struggled to find a merciful God as he wrestled with the language and grammar of Holy Scripture. His 95 theses against indulgences found a popular audience and got the angry attention of church leadership. The reformer’s writing, teaching and preaching spread the message of the Gospel across Europe. But Luther himself did not take credit for the events of the Reformation or for the rediscovered truth that we are justified only by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He did nothing, Luther said, the Word of God did everything. The Word did everything—in the events of the Reformation and in our salvation. As with Michelangelo’s statue, the words that rightly give credit—and all glory and honor—for our salvation might be engraved across each new life in Christ: “The Son of God, the Word made flesh, made this!” We can trust the Word of God. We can trust that living Word that promises forgiveness and life to us through faith in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Words from our epistle reading today, from 1 Peter 1:25, became a motto of the Reformation. In Latin the phrase is *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*. The initials of that motto, VDMA, were sewn onto clothing, flags and banners and etched into swords and even into the armor of war horses. In English the words are: “The Word of the Lord endures forever.” What is that word of the Lord? What is that eternally enduring Word, the Word from God that we can trust? The apostle Peter answers for us: “This word is the good news that was preached to you.” Amen.

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A Reformation Worship Series
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Service One: The Word

Prayers

- The **Prayers** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

Each petition ends with the following response:

P Almighty God,

C **Your Word endures forever.**

+

P Heavenly Father, by your Word you created the heavens and the earth. We give you thanks and praise for all of your gifts, especially for the gift of your Word in Holy Scripture. Help us by the power of the Spirit to learn and grow in faith as we study the treasure that is your written Word. Almighty God,

C **Your Word endures forever.**

P Heavenly Father, when the time was right, you sent forth your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, the

Word made flesh. He accomplished the purpose for which he was sent and carried our sins in his body to the cross. We give you thanks and praise for the gifts of forgiveness and life that are ours through faith in Jesus' holy name. Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

P Heavenly Father, today we give you thanks and praise for the gift of your servant Martin Luther, and for the truth of the Gospel that was restored to the church by the power of the Holy Spirit through your servant's work. As Martin Luther gave credit to your Word for all that was accomplished in the events of the Reformation, so we too know that in our salvation, the Word did everything. Almighty God,

C Your Word endures forever.

P Amen.

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