

## About the Readings on October 27, 2024 – Reformation Sunday

\*\*\**Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)*

### Reformation Day

During the sixteenth century, some German Lutheran churches celebrated an annual thanksgiving day for the Reformation. In 1667 the festival was set for October 31 or the Sunday prior, since by then it was popularly believed that on this date in 1517 Martin Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses on the Wittenberg church door, in anticipation of people coming to worship on November 1, All Saints Day, to view saints' relics. Scholars now question whether this actually occurred, and so we need to take care how we deal with this beloved legend. (The posting may have been a mailing to his bishop.) The date on which to commemorate the life and achievements of Martin Luther is February 18, his death day in 1546. The point of this festival is the continuing need for perpetual reformation of all churches, rather than any Lutheran self-congratulation.

The readings for Reformation are best used at a service scheduled on October 31. Some assemblies replace the readings appointed for the Sunday between October 23 and 29 with the Reformation readings. Current usage suggests instead maintaining the usual Sunday readings and to add emphasis on Reformation, for example, by praying both prayers of the day and by accentuating Reformation emphases in the intercessions.

### [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

The oracle from Jeremiah is appointed because of its promise that God will continue a covenant of grace. Christians have seen that new covenant, and the forgiveness of sin and knowledge of God it brings, as embodied in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and renewed at the supper—"the new covenant in my blood."

### [The Psalm for the Day](#)

The psalm for the day is [Psalm 46](#), which Luther versified and Christianized into his hymn "A mighty fortress is our God." The psalm includes the ancient imagery of an impregnable and peaceful city in which the deity dwells. In classic Christian interpretation, the church might be such a city, but only because Christ is in its center.

### [Romans 3:19-28](#)

This excerpt from Romans is appointed because it summarizes the biblical gospel so transformative for Martin Luther. It is faith in Christ that saves, not "law," that is, religious practices stipulated in the Torah, nor, indeed, "boasting" in our church. The church is called perpetually to renew its faith in God's grace.

### [John 8:31-36](#)

It is not the church, or any one church, that is truth; rather, Jesus Christ is truth. No church can claim ownership of the word; rather, Jesus Christ is the Word. The son is free, that is, free to remain in the house. We gather around that word to receive the truth and experience life in the Father's house.

