PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 46:7, 2, 4–6, 10
The Lord of hosts is with us;*  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.  
Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed,*  
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.  
There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,*  
the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;*  
God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.  
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;*  
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.  
Be still, and know that I am God;*  
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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.

SAY THE APOSTLES’ CREED  
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.

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER
Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger: and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You.  
For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.  
Evening: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.
Around the Word Devotions + the week of October 29 – November 4, 2017

THEME OF THE WEEK: The Reformation of the Church of Christ

The first rule about the Reformation is that you do not talk about the Reformation. We preach Christ crucified. Luther’s story is great. Five hundred years is important, but the Reformation is not about Luther. It’s about Jesus for us sinners. It’s about justification, not by works, but by faith. It’s about a return to what has always been the central teaching of the true church. We celebrate our history. We tell Luther’s story. We remember the saints who fought for the confession we hold dear, but the thing that mattered so dearly to Luther, that he would risk his life for, is the same thing we hold to be the center of all we do and have. Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:12-15 Violence & Truth

It doesn’t make sense that the kingdom of heaven should suffer violence. You’d think God would protect it. Instead, He sends John to be a martyred Elijah. It’s not just the members of the kingdom who suffer violence. It’s the kingdom itself. The borders are trespassed by the lies of the evil one, spoken as false doctrine from mouths claiming righteousness. They produce apathy and worse. So Christ suffered violence too. He is not over these things, but in them for you. Look to the cross to see the kingdom, where Christ suffered to bring you through. Lord God, send Your Holy Spirit that we believe Your holy Word and lead godly lives here in time & there in eternity. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 126 – Jesus wept. For you.

He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing His sheaves with Him. This is not about you. This is not a divine karma that will somehow balance out the things that make you sad with a heaven that makes you happy. The Bible is about Jesus for you. Jesus sowed tears upon the cross, crying out to the Father who had forsaken Him in your stead. It is these crucified tears that turn to shouts of joy as He rises to bring you, His sheaves, with Him to new life. Lord Jesus Christ, by Your tears that gave way to joy, restore our fortunes lost in the fall. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 14:6, 7 – Triune God, be Thou our stay

The ancient church confessed the Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity. The Reformation seeks the same confession: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These Three do not work apart from one another. The Holy Spirit bears the gospel on the mouths of the messengers sent to speak it. The Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity made flesh, is not only Word proclaimed to every tribe and nation, but the story itself as He was crucified and raised, facing judgment for your sins, that You may stand before the Father who made heaven and earth and worship Him. O Father Almighty, send forth Your Spirit to proclaim the message of salvation in Your Son, that all nations and people may worship You, who lives and reigns with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:1-12 Blessed is Jesus

Blessed are those. Most of them don’t describe us, honestly. Only one is directed at me. “Blessed are you when others revile you on My account. Do not be surprised at this.” Yet rejoice, for Christ was made to be the rest for you. Poor in spirit, bearing your sins, mourning over death, meek, yet hungering for your righteousness, merciful, and pure in heart, making peace with the Father for you. Blessed are the saints, for Jesus has won our salvation by becoming what we could not fulfill. He is perfect, even as His Father in heaven is perfect. Lord Jesus Christ, you fulfilled the Law in our stead that we may have Your reward. Help us to rejoice in You, for You have won for us the kingdom. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: John 2:13-17 - WWJD

What would Jesus do? Flip some tables, whip folks selling in His Father’s temple. The idea that Jesus is always friendly is not in the Scriptures. God’s righteous anger against sin is real. It is the same anger that was turned on the Son upon the cross. The temple must be pure because this is where gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation are delivered to you. Even now, we strive to keep the church free from that which would pollute, corrupt, or diminish the Gospel. Lord help us ever to retain the Catechism’s doctrine plain, as Luther taught the Word of truth in simple style to tender youth. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 2:16-21 Sinning is Bad

Christ died to forgive your sins. It worked. That doesn’t make those sins good. It makes them paid for in holy and precious blood. To insist Christ’s death frees us to live in sin is to insist that Christ get behind our desire to hurt our neighbor, God’s creation, and ourselves. We do not put away the Law. We die to it with Jesus and rise holy as He is risen. It works. You are holy now. You are what He has made you. Christ did not die for no purpose. He died for you. Lord Jesus Christ, You have justified us, not by works, but by Your death and resurrection. Fix our eyes upon You, that walking in the paths You have directed us, we may be built up in love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 138 – The Lord is near to you.

The Lord regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar. The Lord is near to you in the places that make you, a sinner, holy. As we bow down toward the temple of our God, there, our Lord is present to answer, and to grant strength of soul. He preserves our life by being with us through death. He delivers us not by pulling us up to heaven, but by descending to carry us, even as His steadfast love endures forever. Lord God, dear Father Almighty, be near to us sinners in Word and Sacrament, and let Your steadfast love grant us strength of soul and peace unto life everlasting. Amen.

To support the work of these devotions visit: www.whatdoesthismean.org/