

Let us pray,

Lord, remind us that we are always reforming. Give us hearts that are moldable to your will.

Amen.

Lets talk about change.

We all love change don't we??

Its one of the best things that happen to us humans!!

I am of course being facetious.

Change can be a great thing, especially when our current circumstances are not so great.

Change when it is into something better can be a wonderful thing!

But change gets a little less fun when we are currently enjoying our life and things change for the worse.

Those of us who are still quite young might not experience this yet, but nostalgia is a powerful emotion.

It is when we look back at the past and remember the good things we experienced.

Our brains tend to be pretty good at erasing a lot of the bad experiences from our past and help us to look back with rose colored glasses.

Even if the past doesn't look great, our brains still try to make them less bad.

Our brains like to try and protect us from harmful experiences.

Nostalgia can feel really good.

But nostalgia can get us into trouble.

It can make us resistant to change.

And even worse, it can make us wish that we were back in a previous time where things were "better."

But the reality is, our brains are not very trustworthy narrators.

I am not trying to say that the past doesn't have good things.

It certainly does!

We can certainly have had great childhood experiences, great relationships, great friendships, great jobs, great pets, that we all wish were still present.

There is definitely a reason to look fondly on the past.

But my point is, the past is gone, the present is now, and the future is yet to be.

We should remember the past, learn from it, but we cannot live in it.

This is true for our personal lives, our professional lives, and our faith and spiritual lives.

As Lutherans we believe in an active currently living God.

God did not stop being God once the final book of the Bible was written.

God is still at work in the world and reaching out to us in this time and in this place.

Just like God did 2,000 years ago.

It would be a mistake to think that going backwards would make going forwards better.

Today's world is different.

Today's world welcomed new babies, new children, new adults, new deaths.

Today's world is not the world of the past.

It is the world of the present.

And our God, spans all realities, all timelines and all generations.

If we are going to be a relevant church, we must be listening to God in the here and now.

Not to the God in the past.

Again, not to say that what happened in the past was wrong or right, or good or bad.

But rather, God was speaking back then, and God is speaking now.

And it is our job to make sure that we are listening to God now, and what he has to say to us in this time and place.

Change is never easy, it is not something that gets easier as we age.

In fact, it gets harder.

Which is why we must focus on our change muscles.

We must be actively working on how to listen to God, so that we can change to be the people God needs us to be today.

This doesn't mean throw everything from the past out.

Its doesn't mean that we can't follow tradition.

Because the reality is, all of us stand on the shoulders of those who came before us.

It would be a mistake to ignore their contributions and their lessons.

But what this Reformation Sunday reminds us, is to ask the question, of what kind of shoulders will we be providing for those who come after us?

We cannot be so fixated on the shoulders of the past that we forget to be the shoulders for those in the future.

What are we doing today to reform and rekindle the faith of our ancestors?

What are we doing today to make the Gospel heard and felt for every new generation?

What are we doing today to help us listen and hear what God is calling for us as church to be in this time and place?

What sacrifices are we willing to make for the sake of a world that greatly distrusts the church?

Martin Luther was not a perfect person, actually pretty far from it. And I would go off on a limb and say he was actually a bad person.

But even in his horribleness, God worked through him to shine a light on the injustices and the need for reform in the Roman Catholic Church, 500 years ago.

Shocker, the church didn't want to hear it, and excommunicated him.

Creating a ripple effect of protestors, who then created their own denominations, creating divisions amongst God's holy church.

I am not saying that everything Martin Luther said was right.

He was also stubborn and a bit of a jerk.

But what I hope we can learn from all of this, is that when we would rather hold onto the past, and onto our current understanding of things, rather than being open to learning new things when new people bring up new problems and ideas.

That we should be open enough to at least listen and take them seriously.

Because God truly speaks through all of us, not just a few.

Jesus in his time was saying a lot of things that went counter to the ways things have always been done.

And those who liked the way things have always been done,
didn't like Jesus very much.

But Jesus did come to earth to affirm our traditions, he came to
earth to shape us into more God centered people.

He opened us up to change.

From a people that were destined for death, now destined for life.

God is not stagnant, God is always moving and leading us as a
species, closer to who God wants us to be.

And the only way we can grow in faith and as faithfilled people, is
by being open to change and transformation as God is calling us.

As Lutherans we affirm that we are always reforming.

We are called to Never stop learning, never stop seeking, never
stop asking questions, never stop praying, never stop looking
forward.

Because every day is a new day filled with Grace to learn more
about God and God's creation.

And to be ever more who God calls us to be through our
Baptismal promises.

And thank God for that.

Amen.