



First, We Give Of Ourselves

Giving in Grace

Today we celebrate 500 years of Reformation history. 500 years of proclaiming the good news that we are saved by grace through faith, apart from works. 500 years of celebrating God's Word (Jesus Christ) and God's word to us, found in the Bible. 500 years of new life in the ever-reforming church, as the Holy Spirit continues to breathe into (*inspire*) us so that we can do God's work in this world.

On this day, we celebrate the heart of our faith: the gospel of Christ – the good news – that makes us free! We hear the covenant God made with our ancestors through the prophet Jeremiah: *"I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* This promise sets us free, as we live in bold confidence that we, too, belong to God through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. We hear again this Sunday Paul's reminder to the Romans, that no one is justified by their own works, but rather we are all justified (*made right with God*) by grace, as a free gift. And we hear Jesus' words to his followers, that in him we are freed from sin. In this freedom, we rejoice, we celebrate, and we worship.

In freedom, we also look to God with thanksgiving. One response to the free gift of grace is for us to be generous with our gifts. We can show our gratitude by being good stewards of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that God gives to us.

When in your life have you been reminded of the freedom from sin and invitation to reconciliation with God that you have received through Jesus Christ?

How have you experienced this freedom as "grace" (*as a gift*)?

What are your favorite Reformation traditions or Reformation stories that remind you of the freedom you have in Christ?