

## Sunday, 26 October 2025 – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost – Reformation Sunday

Presbyterians celebrate the tradition that grounds their faith on Reformation Sunday. It is always the last Sunday in October, marking the occasion in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. In Scotland, the Protestant Reformation was led by the great reformer, John Knox (1514-1572).

<https://pcusa.org/historical-society/history-online/history/reformation-sunday>

### Prelude

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was a leading English composer whose music was often influenced by folk music and songs. His prelude on the hymn tune *Rhosymedre* is from a set of three preludes for organ on Welsh hymn tunes.

### Offertory

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) originally composed *O How Amiable* with military band accompaniment, later arranging it for organ. Based on texts from Psalms 84 and 90, it closes with the first verse of *O God Our Help in Ages Past*.

### Recessional Hymn

*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

No hymn is identified with the Protestant Reformation more than Martin Luther's *A Mighty Fortress*. Luther (1483-1546) left a body of congregational songs that both defined the Lutheran confessional tradition and became truly ecumenical in influence.

The story of Luther's reforming movement is widely known. A Roman Catholic monk, his study led him to believe that the Church of Rome was corrupt. On October 31, 1517, he posted his famous 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, inviting debate. Luther broke with Rome in 1521, refusing to retract his writings before the Diet of Worms. Subsequently, he was recognized as the leader of the German Reformation.

This hymn was in the top ten in our favorite hymns survey.

For further reading: <https://lutheranreformation.org/history/a-mighty-fortress/>

### Postlude

*Highland Cathedral* has been a popular bagpipe tune since it was composed by German musicians Ulrich Roever and Michael Korbin in 1982 for a Highland games in Germany.

## REFORMATION SUNDAY: OCTOBER 26

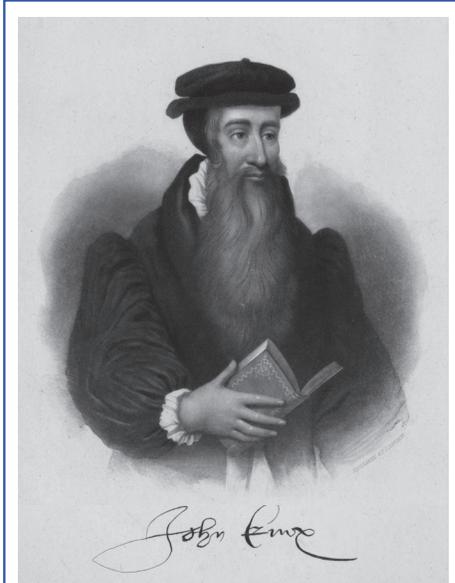
John  
Knox

THE REFORMER  
OF SCOTLAND

*Knox preaching in Old St. Giles Cathedral*

In Scotland, the Protestant Reformation was led by the great reformer, **John Knox (1514-1572)**. During his life in the 16th century, Knox was a tutor, a galley slave to the French, a royal chaplain of King Edward VI, a sword-wielding bodyguard, a scholar and writer, and a preacher of fiery sermons at Old St. Giles in Edinburgh. He was a leading figure in the Scottish Reformation, during which time Protestants fought for religious freedom in countries ruled by the Catholic faith. Knox instilled in his fellow countrymen the duty to oppose unfair government to bring about moral and spiritual change.

In 1559, the leading group of the Reformation movement, the Lords of the Congregation, militarily occupied various cities, including Perth and Edinburgh, where they elected Knox



*Portrait of John Knox, 1842*

minister of St. Giles Cathedral. Later that year, after hearing Knox's Thanksgiving sermon, the Lords of the Congregation asked Knox and his colleagues to write a confession of faith. They obliged, and four days later offered up The First Book of Discipline of the Scots Confession. The Confession was adopted by Parliament in 1560 and remained the Scottish churches' official theological doctrine until 1647, when it was superseded by the Westminster Confession.

The adoption of the Scots Confession did not mean total freedom—rather, the return of the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots in 1561 erected a few more roadblocks for the emerging Reformation. But the flames of the movement had caught, and John Knox's influence continued to spread by and large as the Reformation forever changed the Scottish landscape.

 **PRESBYTERIAN**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
The National Archives of the PC(USA) 

For more Reformation Sunday resources visit  
[www.pcusa.org/rs](http://www.pcusa.org/rs)