

VDMA - short for Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum. Before you roll your eyes and shut your ears, let me assure you, we're not going back to the Latin way. VDMA - Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum. What's that about? We go back 500 years to 1522, to Wittenberg where Frederick the Wise held court. Frederick the Wise was one of the most powerful princes in all Germany. The most powerful people in Europe looked to him for help; the most powerful people in Europe let him have his way. In 1522, this most powerful prince in Germany made a fashion statement, a fashion decree - in his household and court, the right sleeve of every uniform from servant to royalty would be marked - Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum.

Why? We stay in Wittenberg and go back 5 more years, October 31, 1517. Then and there, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Frederick the Wise's Castle Church. As a Catholic monk who loved his Lord and his church, as a university professor with his heart and mind digging into God's Word, as a broken man looking for God's mercy and grace, Luther called his church to debate, to reform, to repent.

Luther called and his German people followed. Luther called and his Roman church fought him. In 1521, they stood him up before the Holy Roman Emperor at the Diet of Worms: "Recant, reject, take back and deny what you have written." Luther would not, he could not go back on God's Word. The Holy Roman Emperor answered back: "If that's the way you want it, we want you dead." But first, Luther made his way out

of town. On his way back home, Luther was kidnaped and taken away, who knows where - that was the official story. What really happened was Frederick the Wise had Luther “arrested” and hidden in protective custody at his Wartburg Castle. While at the Wartburg, Luther had a taste of the knight life, knight with a “k.” But Luther had more important things in his heart and mind than sitting back and taking life easy. He got to work and translated the New Testament from Greek into German.

Meanwhile, back home in Wittenberg, Satan got to work. With Luther gone, radical reforming revolutionaries moved in. They called for a quick end, even a violent end, to Catholicism in Germany. In early 1522, the radical reforming revolutionaries were wreaking havoc with the heart of the church. And soon riots were wreaking havoc and ruin in the churches themselves. Five hundred years ago, 1522 started ugly - ugly for Lutherans who missed Luther’s calm; ugly for Frederick the Wise and his Wittenberg.

Meanwhile, Luther was itching to get back to his people. In March, Luther came down from his castle, and got up into his pulpit. In eight days he preached eight sermons. He pulled out his Bible and ripped into the radicals - truth without love is no truth; truth without love is not the way of Jesus. He pulled out his Bible and he preached peace to his people - the heart of Jesus is patient; the heart of Jesus is forgiving; the heart of Jesus is peace for his people. Within weeks, Luther’s church was back to the heart of Jesus. And Frederick’s Wittenberg was back to calm.

You may be thinking: “What does that have to do with VDMA? What does that have to do with Frederick and those words Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum?” Everything. But we’re not there yet. In spring 1522, Luther is still preaching, now a series from 1 Peter. You saw the bold in our lesson - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”** I can’t prove a direct connection, but in Wittenberg 1522, Luther preaches **“the word of the Lord remains forever”** and in Wittenberg 1522, Frederick the Wise makes his fashion statement, his fashion decree - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”**

At a time when radicals were ripping the church apart, what did Frederick learn? Where did he put his hope? VDMA - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”** At a time when enemies of the church were threatening to step in and rip the church apart a new way, what did Frederick learn? Where did he put his hope? VDMA - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”**

With the riots and the ruin, it wasn’t an easy lesson for Frederick. And it wasn’t an easy lesson for Luther either. Up in the Wartburg Castle, Satan had gone after Luther - “What makes you so sure you’re right?” Sometimes we might wonder the same question about church and Jesus - “What makes you so sure you’re right? What makes us so sure we’re right? What makes me so sure I’m right?” We might be tempted to go with the numbers - “That church - they’re bigger. That church - they’re growing faster. That church - there’s more who think their way than our way ... maybe they’re on to something.” Or we may be tempted to go with our feelings and our senses - “their way sounds better; their way feels better.” It can be so easy - to go

with the flow out there, to go with the flow in here [mind].  
Luther learned we have better - VDMA - **“the word of the Lord remains forever!”**

You heard Peter: **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”** Before that, you heard Isaiah, chapter 40: **“the word of our God stand forever.”** Isaiah 40 sees God’s people in an awful way. They feel crushed in life, forgotten by God. If Isaiah were writing here and now - October in the Midwest - he’d probably describe us as leaves. Green with life one day, then brown and blown away the next. Green with life one day, then dry and crinkly the next. We feel that way some days, don’t we? Some days our bodies feel alive and well, the next we might feel like we’re old and broken and wonder if we’re at death’s door. And it’s not just our bodies, is it? Some days our souls and spirits feel alive and well, but before we know why we feel crinkled and crushed and crumbling. And the world around us? One generation carves the Ten Commandments into stone and sets the stone for all to see; another generation smashes the stone and rejects the Ten Commandments for all to see. For millennia the world recognizes man and woman, and now the world doesn’t know.

What’s the answer? What’s our hope? VDMA - **“the Word of the Lord remains forever.”** No matter how our world changes, VDMA - **“the Word of the Lord remains forever.”** No matter how our feelings change, VDMA - **“the Word of the Lord remains forever.”** No matter how our bodies age and fall apart, VDMA - **“the Word of the Lord remains forever.”** No matter what goes on in here [body], up here [mind], out there [in

the world], this is the constant that gives us hope, this is the constant we build our lives on - VDMA - **“the Word of the Lord remains forever.”**

And what does the Word of the Lord do? It reveals God’s truth. Better than science and philosophy, better than a look around at the world, better than our feelings, the Word reveals Truth, God’s Truth. The Word reveals Truth, God’s Truth, on right and wrong, good and evil. That means, whether I like it or not, God’s Word reveals the Truth, God’s Truth about me, my right and wrong, my failure and fault before God, my guilt and need before God. Whether I like it or not, whether I feel it or not, whether the world agrees or not, the Word reveals the ugly, awful Truth that I deserve to be canceled by God, cursed by God, damned by God to hell. My feelings can’t change that Truth; our culture can’t cancel that Truth; and no matter how good we try to be, our good can’t cover and hide that Truth.

Luther realized that Truth. He felt it in his bones; he saw it in his world; but most of all he read it in God’s Word. And that had Luther searching for an answer, God’s answer. He didn’t find it in his feelings; he didn’t find it out in the world; he found it in God’s Word. In Isaiah he heard God: **“Comfort, comfort my people.”** He heard God: **“Your sins have been paid for, pardoned.”** He heard God point to Jesus: **“Here is your God!”** See, **the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.”**

Luther heard God promise, not just command, but promise a new life: **“Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”** In our lesson, throughout Isaiah, in Peter, Paul, and all the Bible, Luther heard the Word of God, and again and again he echoed Isaiah and Peter - VDMA - **“The Word of the Lord remains forever.”**

We get to echo the same Truth - VDMA - **“The Word of the Lord remains forever.”** When the world crushes, we get to hear God: **“Comfort, comfort my people.”** When our failures and faults, when our sin and guilt, eats way at us, we get to look to Jesus and the cross, and hear God: **“your sins have been paid for, pardoned.”** When we’re anxious, on edge, we get to look to Jesus, and hear God: **“I’ve got you.”** When this world, when this life seems too messed up for hope, we get to look to Jesus and hear God: **“I’ve got a better life, a better place, heaven for you.”** We get to hear God and echo Isaiah, Peter, Luther, and Frederick the Wise - VDMA - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”** Today, we celebrate and thank God - You have that Word, and he has you! Amen. VDMA - **“the word of the Lord remains forever.”**

October 29 & 30, 2022

## DIVINE SERVICE II

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY...** it can seem that “truth” can change as quickly as the swipe of a screen, that a person’s “word” can change as easily as pressing the button on a remote control.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we hear the Word and Truth that does not change ... a Word and Truth you can rely on ... a Word and Truth that gives and powers life with God today and forever!

### OPENING HYMN

*“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”*

**Hymn 863 Stand for verse 4**

A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon;  
he helps us free from ev’ry need that has us now o’ertaken.  
The old evil foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might  
are his dread arms in fight; on earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected;  
but for us fights the valiant one whom God himself elected.  
You ask, “Who is this?” Jesus Christ it is, the almighty Lord,  
and there’s no other God; he holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us,  
we tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us.  
This world’s prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none.  
He’s judged; the deed is done; one little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain nor any thanks have for it;  
he’s by our side upon the plain with his good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife,  
though all may be gone, our victory is won; the kingdom’s ours forever!

**+ HOLY BAPTISM +  
Kahlan Irene Smith**

*CW p. 151*

**HYMN (SUNDAY)**

*“God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It”*

**Hymn 679**

God’s own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!  
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price.  
Do I need earth’s treasures many? I have one worth more than any  
that brought me salvation free, lasting to eternity!

Sin, disturb my soul no longer: I am baptized into Christ!  
I have comfort even stronger: Jesus’ cleansing sacrifice.  
Should a guilty conscience seize me since my baptism did release me  
in a dear forgiving flood, sprinkling me with Jesus’ blood?

Satan, hear this proclamation: I am baptized into Christ!  
Drop your ugly accusation, I am not so soon enticed.  
Now that to the font I’ve traveled, all your might has come unraveled,  
and, against your tyranny, God, my Lord, unites with me!

Death, you cannot end my gladness: I am baptized into Christ!  
When I die, I leave all sadness to inherit paradise!  
Though I lie in dust and ashes faith’s assurance brightly flashes:  
Baptism has the strength divine to make life immortal mine.

There is nothing worth comparing to this lifelong comfort sure!  
Open-eyed my grave is staring: even there I’ll sleep secure.  
Though my flesh awaits its raising, still my soul continues praising:  
I am baptized into Christ; I’m a child of paradise!

**INVOCATION**

**M:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**CONFESSION**

**M:** Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins,  
asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

**C:** **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

**For faithless worrying and selfish pride,  
For sins of habit and sins of choice,  
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,  
I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.  
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

#### **ABSOLUTION**

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

#### **LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)**

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

#### **LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER**

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

*Isaiah 10:1-11*

Comfort, comfort my people,  
says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and proclaim to her  
that her hard service has been completed,  
that her sin has been paid for,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling:  
"In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the LORD;  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.  
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out."  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass,  
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.  
The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.  
Surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
**but the word of our God endures forever.**"

You who bring good news to Zion,  
go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with a shout,  
lift it up, do not be afraid;  
say to the towns of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”  
See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and he rules with a mighty arm.  
See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.  
He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;  
he gently leads those that have young.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 12**

*“O Lord, Take Pity Once You’ve Seen”*  
**Hymn 865**

O Lord, take pity once you’ve seen what’s leaving us so shaken:  
your saints are few and far between— we feel we’ve been forsaken.  
So many call your Word untrue, refusing to believe in you—  
they have us far outnumbered.

May God root out all those who teach religion that is twisted,  
who say with bold, defiant speech: “We cannot be resisted.  
For we alone have right and might; our views are welcomed with delight.  
To whom must we now answer?”

Therefore God says: “I won’t delay! My people’s hopes are waning.  
Their sighs disclose their great dismay; I’ve heard their sad complaining.  
My healing Word will work as planned,  
will bring relief, will make them stand, will strengthen and uphold them.”

Dear Lord, the godless gather round the guides whose teachings suit them.  
Within your Church let there be found the courage to refute them.  
Preserve your Word and keep it pure, and thus we shall remain secure  
from evils that surround us!

**SECOND READING**

*1 Peter 1:23–2:3*

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

“All people are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;  
the grass withers and the flowers fall,  
**but the word of the Lord endures forever.”**

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*1 Peter 1:25*

Alleluia. The word of the Lord endures forever! Alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

*Matthew 7:24–29*

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*“Thy Strong Word”*

**Hymn 630**

Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; at thy speaking it was done.  
For created light we thank thee while thine ordered seasons run.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness, dark as night and deep as death,  
broke the light of thy salvation, breathed thine own life-giving breath.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; bright with thine own holiness,  
glorious now, we press toward glory, and our lives our hopes confess.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

From the cross thy wisdom shining breaketh forth in conqu’ring might;  
from the cross forever beameth all thy bright redeeming light.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Give us lips to sing thy glory, tongues thy mercy to proclaim,  
throats to shout the hope that fills us, mouths to speak thy holy name.  
Alleluia, alleluia! May the light which thou dost send  
fill our songs with alleluias, alleluias without end!

God the Father, light-creator, to thee laud and honor be.  
To thee, Light from Light begotten, praise be sung eternally.  
Holy Spirit, light-revealer, glory, glory be to thee.  
Mortals, angels, now and ever praise the holy Trinity!

## SERMON

### NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### PRAYER

**M:** May this be a time, O Lord, for confession and repentance. Forgive us for the apathy that harms our faith and hinders our works. Forgive us for boasting of our past achievements and for blaming others for our present problems. Rid us of indifference to public worship and Bible study. Destroy the distrust that plagues us, and shatter every thought and word that harms the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

C: **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when you renew us again by Word and sacrament, when you reform our hearts and minds, and when you restore to us the joy of fellowship and service. Grant to us in this age and in this place the courage, steadfastness, and dedication of those who have gone before us.

C: **May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when we recommit and reconsecrate ourselves to the ministry of the gospel. Let us find joy in our unity, zeal for our work, and success in our labor.

C: **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, that his ways may be known on earth, his salvation among all nations. Amen.**

#### 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.**

#### THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)  
(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus***

**O holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of pow'r and might,  
Your glory, earth and heaven  
In countless ways recite.  
Hosanna! Come and save us,  
Lord God of hosts on high,  
And in your grace and mercy  
Receive our fervent cry.**

**Hosanna in the highest!  
How truly blest is he  
Who in God's name is coming  
To set his people free!  
He comes to bring salvation  
And with his blood outpoured,  
Deliver us from bondage—  
Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

M: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.  
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.  
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.  
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

C: **Amen.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

## LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

Amen.

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

*"O God, Our Lord, Your Holy Word"*

**Hymn 643**

O God, our Lord, your holy Word was long a hidden treasure  
till to its place it was by grace restored in fullest measure.

For this today our thanks we say and gladly glorify you.

Your mercy show and grace bestow on all who still deny you.

Salvation true by faith in you— that is your gospel's preaching,  
the heart and core of Bible lore in all its sacred teaching.

In Christ we must put all our trust, not in our deeds or labor;

with conscience pure and heart secure love you, Lord, and our neighbor.

Lord, you alone this work have done by your free grace and favor.

All who believe will grace receive through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

And though the foe would overthrow your Word with grim endeavor,

all he has wrought must come to naught; your Word will stand forever!

Since you are mine, my Lord divine, death holds no dreadful terrors;  
your precious blood, my highest good, has blotted out my errors.  
My thanks to you, your Word is true; fulfill your promise ever,  
and mercy give while here I live and heav'nly bliss forever.

### CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

### CLOSING HYMN

*“God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”*

Hymn 640

God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;  
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.  
Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure  
throughout all generations.

### OFFERING

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