**Reformation 2017 – Commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation**

Almighty God, gracious Lord, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your Word, protect and comfort them in their temptations, defend them against all their enemies, and bestow on the Church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever. AMEN

**Psalm 46**

1God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**2Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;**

3though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah

**4There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**

5God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.

**6The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.**

7The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

**8Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.**

9He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

**10“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”**

11The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

**Psalm Prayer**

Lord God our refuge and strength, when the restless powers of this world and the waters of hell rise up against your holy city, watch over it and keep it safe. By the river that flows from the throne of the lamb, purify this new Jerusalem as your chosen dwelling, for you are with us, our stronghold now and forever. AMEN

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**COMMENTARY:**

In each of three Strophes a different word picture of great power is brought to a conclusion by an incidental hymnic testimony to God united by a refrain most likely sung by the congregation or choir. The keynote repeated in each strophe is an unfettered confession of faith in God. Within the triadic framework of Creation-History-Eschatology the themes continually point toward the timeless and eternal realization of divine salvation.

FIRST STROPHE – formation and dissolution of the world (vv1-3)

 The God who is present in the act of creation and in every aspect of the ongoing creation can be heard in the roaring waves, and the shaking of the hills, the floods and storms that rage around and about us, yet the word of this God is not one of threat and fear but of assurance, constancy, and promise. Those who know/fear Him rejoice.

SECOND STROPHE – The raging of the nations (vv4-7)

 In contrast to the roaring waves we now imagine the peacefulness of the river banks along the Jordan river, the cultic peace of Jerusalem, and the comfort of “home” to every peoples. As historical events in any age take on cosmic significance the hand of God is often seen at hand turning such events from chaos to purposeful peace, from devastation to new beginnings. Those who hear such this voice in world events know/fear YHWH and rejoice in Him.

THIRD STROPHE – The Divine Kingdom of Peace (vv 8-11)

 Destruction and devastation abound yet when God destroys the means of war, shatters human capacity to do harm, and thwarts every effort to wreak violence and vengeance, only then true peace is at hand. Those who hear the promise of peace in the ends of wars, violence and the desolation of human desires rejoice in YHWH.