

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter

### May 16, 2021

John 17 is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. A portion of that prayer is our Gospel lesson today. In it Jesus asks the Father to keep the disciples faithful to Him. He says, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one." May this be our prayer today for all, especially the newly confirmed in the faith.

#### An Easter Salutation

*adapted from 2 Timothy 1:10 & Psalm 118*

**L** Christ is risen! Alleluia!

**C** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

**L** Christ has destroyed death. Alleluia!

**C** And has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Alleluia!

**L** The Lord is my strength and my song. Alleluia!

**C** He has become my salvation. Alleluia!

**L** I will not die, but live. Alleluia!

**C** I will proclaim what the Lord has done. Alleluia!

**L** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**C** as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

**L** I will not die, but live. Alleluia!

**C** I will proclaim what the Lord has done. Alleluia!

**L** Christ is risen! Alleluia!

**C** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

**Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng** Lutheran Service Book 813, Lutheran Worship 455, The Lutheran Hymnal n/a



1 Re - joice, O pil - grim throng! Re - joice, give  
2 With voice as full and strong As o - cean's  
3 With all the an - gel choirs, With all the  
4 Yet on and on - ward still, With hymn and  
5 Still lift your stan - dard high, Still march in



thanks, and sing; Your fes - tal ban - ner  
surg - ing praise, Send forth the stur - dy  
saints on earth Pour out the strains of  
chant and song, Through gate and porch and  
firm ar - ray, As pil - grims through the



wave on high, The cross of Christ your king.  
 hymns of old, The psalms of an - cient days.  
 joy and bliss, True rap - ture, no - blest mirth.  
 col - umned aisle The hal - lowed path - ways throng.  
 dark - ness wend Till dawns the gold - en day.



Re - joice! Re - joice! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing!

6 At last the march shall end;  
 The wearied ones shall rest;  
 The pilgrims find their home at last,  
 Jerusalem the blest. Refrain

7 Praise Him who reigns on high,  
 The Lord whom we adore:  
 The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
 One God forevermore. Refrain

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**L** In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

**L** Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

**C** Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

**L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

**C** But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

**L** Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

**C** God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

**L** Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

**Introit Psalm 27:1a,4-5, 10, 14; antiphon Psalm 27:7**

**L** Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;  
 be gracious to me and answer me!

**C** The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
 whom shall I fear?

- L** One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and  
to inquire in his temple.
- C** **For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.**
- L** For my father and my mother have forsaken me,  
but the Lord will take me in.
- C** **Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
- L** Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;  
be gracious to me and answer me!

## Kyrie

- |                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b> |
| <b>L</b> O Christ, | <b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b> |
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b> |

## Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
- C** **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we  
praise You for Your glory.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our  
prayer.
- C** **For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not  
without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live  
and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## Acts 1:12–26

<sup>12</sup>Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath  
day's journey away. <sup>13</sup>And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying,  
Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of  
Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these with one accord were devoting  
themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,  
<sup>16</sup>“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David  
concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered among us and was  
allotted his share in this ministry.” <sup>18</sup>(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and

falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)  
<sup>20</sup>“For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

““May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and

““Let another take his office.’

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,  
<sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” <sup>23</sup>And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**Gradual adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6**

**L** Christ has risen from the dead.

**C** God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,

**L** He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;

**C** He has put all things under his feet.

**Psalm 1**

**L** <sup>1</sup>Blessèd is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**C** <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**L** <sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

**C** <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**L** <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**C** <sup>6</sup>for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

**1 John 5:9–15**

<sup>9</sup>If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup>And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; John 14:18

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

## John 17:11b–19

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>11b</sup>[Jesus said:] “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup>I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

- L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in Your Word; Curb those who  
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, Your pow'r make known, For You are  
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, Send peace and

by de - ceit or sword Would wrest the king - dom from Your  
Lord of lords a - lone; De - fend Your ho - ly Church that  
u - ni - ty on earth; Sup - port us in our fi - nal

Son And bring to naught all He has done.  
we May sing Your praise e - ter - nal - ly.  
strife And lead us out of death to life.

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### Devotional thoughts:

This Sunday is Confirmation Sunday at Christ Lutheran Church in Stevensville, Michigan where I served for 32 years with 30 of those years as Senior Pastor. The third Sunday in May has always been Confirmation Sunday, well almost always.

Many of our families have relatives in neighboring churches. Some years before I arrived at Christ Lutheran, it was decided that each church would have an assigned Sunday for confirmation so that families would be able to attend confirmation services for nieces and nephews at nearby churches. Christ Lutheran was assigned the third Sunday in May.

The first year that I was senior pastor was much like this year. The third Sunday of May was the last Sunday of the Easter season which means that the next Sunday would be Pentecost.

At our pre-confirmation meeting in the fall, the former senior pastor announced to the parents that confirmation Sunday would be moved to the fourth Sunday in May so that the young people would be confirmed on Pentecost. This decision seemed reasonable at the time. Unfortunately, a couple of months later, the calendar came out with Confirmation Sunday again scheduled for the third Sunday in May. No one noticed the error until the former senior pastor had accepted a call to another position.

So as the newly minted senior pastor, I was approached by several parents who explained to me that their relatives had scheduled trips to southwestern Michigan for the fourth Sunday in May and now confirmation was changed to the third Sunday in May. They wanted to know what we were going to do.

I put on my Solomon Hat and decided that confirmation would indeed be on the fourth Sunday of May since it was the first date announced and trips were planned. Then I declared that ever after, Confirmation Sunday would be the third Sunday in May! I am happy to report that I was able to keep that promise for the rest of my ministry at Christ Lutheran even though there were some times that I had to miss important family events so I could be faithful to this promise.

Maybe you remember your own confirmation. I hope that it was an important day that you remember fondly. In our family, Confirmation Day has always been accompanied by a large celebration. Family and friends are invited. An open house follows. It's an important day to commemorate and cherish.

I know some pastors who reject the notion of celebrating confirmation. They prefer to make it a low-key event, arguing that celebrating at confirmation makes it too much like a graduation. They then suggest that young people believe that they are done with the church. I am unconvinced by this argument.

High school graduation no longer means an end to education. For many, it means the beginning of higher education in a college or university. College graduation no longer means an end to education but it is the beginning of a lifelong learning project.

Big celebrations at weddings are not a declaration of the end of love but only the beginning. So it is also with confirmation celebrations. Something important has happened. It is time to celebrate!

What important thing happens in confirmation? There are several good answers to this question but our focus for today is the making of a promise! At weddings, couples promise to be faithful to each other until death parts them! In confirmation, we promise to be faithful to God until death brings us to be with Him in heaven.

After confessing their faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed, the pastor asks:

**Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?**

To this, the confirmation class responds, **"I do so intend with the help of God."**

This question and answer are reminders of the suffering experienced by Christian martyrs in years past and the words of Jesus in Revelation 2:10, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Confirmation is about instruction in the Christian faith. It is about promises made and kept. It is about a lifelong commitment to Christ and His Church. Most important of all, it is about the gift of eternal life won by Jesus on the cross.

Keeping promises can be hard. Faithfulness is difficult. But thanks be to God, He keeps His promises to us. As we think about confirmation, it is good for us to remember the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy:

The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

if we endure, we will also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

if we are faithless, he remains faithful—

for he cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

As you remember your confirmation and the promises that you made, pray for the newly confirmed. Pray that we will remain faithful and so receive the crown of life!

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

**L** Lord of the Church, You led Your apostles to choose Matthias to replace Judas. Guide Your Church on earth in the calling of those who serve, that Your Word would continue to grow and bear fruit. Keep them faithful and bless their ministry.

**C Amen.**

**L** Lord God, Jesus prayed that we would be kept from the evil one, we pray that you would continue to sanctify us in the truth of Your holy word as we continue our pilgrimage through the travails of this world.

**C Amen.**

**L** Lord God, as we come to the end of this Eastertide, grant that we would always keep our minds on Jesus' resurrection and His triumph over death that we may rejoice in the life eternal granted to all believers as we anticipate the day when we will join in singing Your praises with all the company of heaven.

**C Amen.**

**L** Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Protect all who attend to our needs during this time of national emergency and pandemic. We ask that you would quickly grant relief according to Your will.

**C** Amen.

**C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**C** 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.

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**L** The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**C** Amen.

**The Church's One Foundation** Lutheran Service Book 644, Lutheran Worship 289, The Lutheran Hymnal 473



1 The Church's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;  
2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth;  
3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der The world sees her op - pressed,  
4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion And tu - mult of her war



She is His new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the Word.  
Her char - ter of sal - va - tion: One Lord, one faith, one birth.  
By schisms rent a - sun - der, By her - e - sies dis - tressed,  
She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for - ev - er - more



From heav'n He came and sought her To be His ho - ly bride;  
One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par - takes one ho - ly food,  
Yet saints their watch are keep - ing; Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her long - ing eyes are blest,





With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.  
And to one hope she press - es With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.  
And soon the night of weep - ing Shall be the morn of song.  
And the great Church vic - to - rious Shall be the Church at rest.

5 Yet she on earth has union  
With God, the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won.  
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!  
Lord, save us by Your grace  
That we, like saints before us,  
May see You face to face.

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## Confirmation

We know that Confirmation is not a sacrament and that it is not commanded in the Bible. However, it is important for us to remember that everything we do in confirmation is commanded in the Bible. If we were to do away with confirmation, we would still need to continue with the process that we call confirmation.

The pastor says at the beginning of the Rite of Confirmation, "Beloved in the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Jesus directs us to baptize and when we bring our children to Him in baptism we are fulfilling His will. But He makes it clear that Christian discipleship does not end with baptism. He also directs us to teach them everything that He has commanded.

It has become rather fashionable in some corners of the church to downplay the importance of doctrine and teaching in favor of emotions and feelings. Yet Jesus says, "Teach them everything." Even if we were to do away with confirmation, we would still be required to teach our young people the whole will and counsel of God. Following confirmation instruction, there should be no secrets remaining about what we teach in our church.

Confirmation is a time to celebrate the faithfulness of each student who has devoted himself to the study of God's word. It is also a time to rejoice that these fellow believers join with us in publicly confessing the faith.

Jesus said: "Whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father in heaven. But he that denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father in heaven." If we no longer observed confirmation, we would still need to provide an opportunity for each Christian to publicly confess the faith.

Please join me in praying that all confirmands will remain faithful to their public confession of faith and so receive the crown of life. Indeed, with them numbered may we be, here and in eternity!

Pastor Quardokus

**Service Notes:**

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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# Enhancing Your Worship

## Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27  
My eyes are awake through the night watches,  
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter

### May 17 – May 22, 2021

#### Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

#### Monday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

#### Introit Psalm 27:1a,4-5, 10, 14; antiphon Psalm 27:7

**L** Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;  
be gracious to me and answer me!

**C** **The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?**

**L** One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and  
to inquire in his temple.

**C** **For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.**

**L** For my father and my mother have forsaken me,  
but the Lord will take me in.

**C** **Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**

**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**L** Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;  
be gracious to me and answer me!

#### Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

“Whom shall I fear?” David asks this short question at the beginning of Psalm 27. We might fear many things such as the darkness, or creepy, crawly things, or dangerous storms. However, this Psalm begins by asking about people we fear.

Whom do you fear? We may rightly fear the aggression of enemies or the terror of criminals. David faced enemies and adversaries who breathed out violent threats against him.

You also may rightly fear secret enemies. These are people who wish you harm but keep these thoughts secret. They may even pose for a time as your friends or confidants, but in their deepest thoughts, they are plotting for your downfall.

But David exclaims that when God is your Light and Salvation, you do not need to fear anyone or anything. God is able to vanquish every foe. On the cross, Jesus destroyed sin, and death, and the devil. There is no problem so great that He cannot solve it. There is no difficulty that He cannot overcome.

Sometimes, we must learn patience. God has a way of coming to our rescue in His own time and in His own way. We cry aloud to Him and He is gracious and answers. But as you wait for His gracious answer, be strong, and let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord.

**L** Let us pray. Lord, thank You for listening to my daily prayers. Grant me patience and a strong heart as I await Your deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**C** Amen

## Tuesday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; 16:33b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** Let us pray: O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

We live in difficult and dangerous times. News reports are more depressing every day. There is violence in even our smallest cities. Riots go unchecked in the streets. Political leaders seem to be bullies. The litany of woes goes on and on. In other words, we live in a sinful world. Every generation is faced with danger and difficulty.

My mother would often ask after watching the evening news, “Do you think that this is the end of the world?” It is easy to speculate about this with all the gloomy reporting. It seems each correspondent is trained to make their segment sound more dreadful than the last.

I would often remind my mother that yes, we may be facing the end of the world but that things have been bad in the past. She experienced the Great Depression. She lived through World War Two. She raised a family during the Cold War under the threat of nuclear annihilation. Her cousin was killed in Vietnam. Such is life.

But we are not left without consolation. Jesus has ascended. We are left to carry on. He knew that work and ministry in a sinful world would always be hard and grief-filled. This is why He sent the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit brings comfort and relief. He gives us faith and the peace of God that passes all understanding. He reminds 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 King of glory, Lord of hosts has conquered sin, death, and the devil. The world is a difficult and dangerous place but He has overcome the world. In Him, we have comfort, peace, and joy. Do not lose heart. Jesus has won for us eternal life. We look to the day when we will experience never-ending happiness in paradise.

Let us pray: O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(To learn the Apostle Paul's perspective, read 2 Corinthians 4.)

## Wednesday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; 16:33b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

## Psalm 1

**L** <sup>1</sup>Blessèd is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**C** <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**L** <sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

**C** <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**L** <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**C** <sup>6</sup>for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Today, I am reminded of Julie Andrews as Maria Von Trapp in the Sound of Music. One day she learns that the Von Trapp children do not know how to sing. She then teaches them the Do-Re-Mi song. There is no way I could count all the times that I have sung “Doe, a deer, a female deer. Ray, a drop of golden sun.”

But do you remember the start of the song? She sings “Let's start at the very beginning. A very good place to start.” That phrase came to mind as I read Psalm 1. What a very good place to start when reading the Psalms!

The way to be “unblessed” is to listen to the advice of the wicked, to walk side-by-side with sinful people on the path to destruction, and to mock and ridicule godly, wholesome people. Rather the way to be blessed is to delight in God’s word and meditate on it day and night.

Yesterday, we considered the sorry state of the world around us. The way to be “unblessed” is to jump right in and play that game of violence, bullying, and power-grabbing. Satan often tempts us to manipulate, deceive, and exploit the people around us to achieve our goals. Unfortunately, we see this even in the church!

However, the blessed escape that world of sin and destruction. They live under the grace of God and receive forgiveness for all their past deception and aggression. The blessed are free to trust God and meditate on His word of life and salvation.

Ultimately, the way of the wicked will perish! Those who trust in the Lord receive His blessings now and in eternity.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for Your word of life and salvation. Motivate us to meditate on it day and night through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Thursday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; 16:33b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

## Acts 1:12–26

<sup>12</sup>Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. <sup>13</sup>And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, <sup>16</sup>“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” <sup>18</sup>(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup>“For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

““May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and

““Let another take his office.’

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,  
<sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” <sup>23</sup>And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Do you enjoy working with people? It can be a challenge. One pastor quipped, “Being a pastor wouldn’t be so bad if you didn’t have to work with people!” But shepherds must live with the sheep.

In this section of Acts, we read about the first congregational meeting in the church. Jesus is not physically there to guide the process. It is not openly stated but there is a slight disagreement in who should serve as the apostle to restore their number to twelve.

Peter presents the qualification and job description for this individual.

1. He must have been with them from the time of Jesus’ baptism until Jesus’ ascension.
2. He must become a witness to Jesus’ resurrection.

We don’t know how many disciples met this qualification but two names are put forward. Each one must have had supporters in the meeting. They both were qualified but only one could serve. In this instance, they chose to cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias. I feel confident that the supporters of Justus and his friends were disappointed. But they willingly accepted the outcome of the selection process.

We all can learn from this event. Many times in the church we are faced with making decisions between two or more options. In our human wisdom, each option has value. But a decision must be made. When the choice is made, some will be disappointed. If the result is not sinful or wrong, it is beneficial if all are willing to accept the outcome (as difficult as that may be!).

Life in the Church is an exercise in humility and grace. Because we are fallible human beings, sometimes poor or bad decisions are made. But God is still in charge! He overcomes evil with good. Death becomes life. Grace and charity prevail.

Prayer: Almighty God, You are in charge of the Church. Grant that we would learn to work faithfully and effectively in the church even when decisions are made that we disagree with, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Friday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; 16:33b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

<b>L</b>	O Lord,	<b>C</b>	<b>Have Mercy on us.</b>
<b>L</b>	O Christ,	<b>C</b>	<b>Have Mercy on us.</b>
<b>L</b>	O Lord,	<b>C</b>	<b>Have Mercy on us.</b>

## 1 John 5:9–15

<sup>9</sup>If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup>And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

I thought I was wrong once! No one wants to admit to making a mistake but such is life. I find it easy to see the flaws of logic in people around me. It's much more difficult when I evaluate my own decisions. Yet the evidence is abundant. People make mistakes! They make wrong decisions. They believe falsehoods.

The mandatory mask order has recently been lifted by the CDC (I think since the mayor of Chicago still says that she will wear a mask). Following the ever-changing advice of those who “follow the science” gives evidence to the fact that we all make mistakes, even those who smugly “follow the science.”

The testimony of God is greater than all human testimony and understanding. We ought never to reject God's word based on flawed human reason. God is not a liar. Whatever He says is true! “This is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12).

There is much to learn from the Bible. But the Bible has ONE overarching purpose! It is to bring you eternal life through Jesus. Never let human logic or reason dissuade you from the truth.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the love that is ours in Christ Jesus and the truth of Your word. Grant that we would ever trust Your testimony and believe in Jesus for salvation through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Saturday

<b>L</b>	In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
<b>C</b>	<b>Amen.</b>

## Gradual adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

<b>L</b>	Christ has risen from the dead.
<b>C</b>	<b>God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,</b>
<b>L</b>	He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
<b>C</b>	<b>He has put all things under his feet.</b>

## Verse of the Day: Romans 6:9; 16:33b

<b>L</b>	Alleluia, Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
<b>C</b>	<b>Alleluia, Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia.</b>



## Kyrie

<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.
<b>L</b> O Christ,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.
<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.

### John 17:11b–19

<sup>11b</sup>[Jesus said:] “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup>I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Jesus’ words are always overflowing with information. This small section of His High Priestly Prayer is no exception. Let us concentrate on John 17: 17 today, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

Jesus makes this identity statement, “Your word is truth.” It is His prayer that the disciples would be made holy (sanctified) in the word of God.

God’s word of truth is the only means to holiness in this world of sinners. To be made holy, we must first be cleansed of sin. We are fully and completely cleansed from sin when we believe the Gospel! That is when we have faith in God’s holy word that Jesus died on the cross for sinners and takes away my sin and the sin of the world.

We then are free to live holy lives by following God’s holy law as revealed in His word. We are not at liberty to invent our own modes of holiness and righteousness. We are sanctified when we faithfully follow His word of truth.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for Your word of truth. Grant that we would never be deceived into believing that Your word is ever false or misleading but grant that we would ever believe in the forgiveness that Jesus won for us on the cross and move us to follow Your holy will as revealed in the Bible through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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