

The Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2026

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!

Fight the Good Fight

Lutheran Service Book 664, Lutheran Worship 299, The Lutheran Hymnal 447



1 Fight the good fight with all your might; Christ is your
2 Run the straight race through God's good grace; Lift up your
3 Cast care a - side, lean on your guide; His bound - less
4 Faint not nor fear, His arms are near; He chang - es



strength, and Christ your right. Lay hold on life, and
eyes, and seek His face. Life with its way be -
mer - cy will pro - vide. Trust, and en - dur - ing
not who holds you dear; On - ly be - lieve, and



it shall be Your joy and crown e - ter - nal - ly.
fore us lies; Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.
faith shall prove Christ is your life and Christ your love.
you will see That Christ is all e - ter - nal - ly.

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 100:1–5; antiphon: Psalm 101:1

L I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

C **Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!**

Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

L Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

C **Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!**

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

L For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

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 I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

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.**

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

¹²Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And 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. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“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. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(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. ¹⁹And 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.) ²⁰“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.’

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning 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.” ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And 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 adapted 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 68:1-10

- L** ¹God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;
and those who hate him shall flee before him!
- C** ²**As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;
as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!**
- L** ³But the righteous shall be glad;
they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!
- C** ⁴**Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;
his name is the LORD; exult before him!**
- L** ⁵Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
- C** ⁶**God settles the solitary in a home;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.**
- L** ⁷O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,
- C** ⁸**the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.**
- L** ⁹Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished;
- C** ¹⁰**your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.**

1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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

C **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

John 17:1–11

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

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁶“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

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

The Apostles' Creed

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**

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

Lutheran Service Book 821, Lutheran Worship n/a, The Lutheran Hymnal n/a



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; His the
2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans Are we
3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, Here on
4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, Lord om -



scep - ter, His the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! His the
left in sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! He is
earth our food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! Here the
nip - o - tent we own; Al - le - lu - ia! Born of



tri - umph, His the vic - to - ry a - lone.
near us; Faith be - lieves, nor ques - tions how.
sin - ful Flee to You from day to day.
Mar - y, Earth Your foot - stool, heav'n Your throne.



Hark! The songs of peace - ful Zi - on Thun - der
Though the cloud from sight re - ceived Him When the
In - ter - ces - sor, Friend of sin - ners, Earth's Re -
As with - in the veil You en - tered, Robed in



like a might - y flood: "Je - sus out of
for - ty days were o'er, Shall our hearts for -
deem - er, hear our plea - Where the songs of
flesh, our great High Priest, Here on earth both



ev - 'ry na - tion Has re - deemed us by His blood."
get His prom - ise: "I am with you ev - er - more?"
all the sin - less Sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.
priest and vic - tim In the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

5 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
His the scepter, His the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
Thunder like a mighty flood:
“Jesus out of ev’ry nation
Has redeemed us by His blood.”

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Devotional thoughts:

The last time I saw Clara Kitzinger was at the party for her 100th birthday in February of 2011. The Lord called her home on New Year’s Eve before her 101st birthday.

Clara was a very special person to all who knew her. She had an infectious laugh and a bubbly personality.

Until she moved to be near her daughter, Clara lived a block from our house. I was often there, fixing something or clearing snow from her driveway. But I remember her mainly from my Bible studies. She never missed one.

Most of all, I remember Clara for giving theologically precise and correct answers to all my questions. She was so eager to answer that sometimes I had to ask her to let others respond.

Whenever I would ask, “Does anyone know what Jesus’ words in John 17 are called?”, without a pause, she would exclaim, “Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer!” Of course, she was right!

This entire chapter is His prayer. The prayer is divided into three parts. In the first part, Jesus prays to be glorified. In the second part, He prays for His disciples. In the third part, He prays for all believers. Our reading for today includes the first part and half of the second. You may wish to read the entire prayer.

Most of us learned in our confirmation classes that Jesus fills the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, during His earthly ministry, Jesus constantly taught God’s word to the people. He continues to fulfill that office today through pastors, teachers, and the Christian people when they teach God’s word from the Bible.

In the very next chapter of John, we hear Jesus tell Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). At His ascension, Jesus was crowned “with many crowns, the lamb upon His throne.” Now He rules in a threefold kingdom. He upholds the universe by His word (Hebrews 1:3). He rules in the hearts of believers (Colossians 3:15). He rules in His heavenly kingdom (1 Timothy 4:18). If you remember that these three are known as Jesus’ kingdoms of power, grace, and glory, you have a bit of Clara Kitzinger in you!

Jesus begins His prayer recognizing that His hour has come! He will soon accomplish the work that was given to Him by the Father. He will be both the sacrifice and the priest who offers the sacrifice when He submissively allows himself to be crucified. He did this so that we may have eternal life (Hebrews 12:2).

We live in the time when Jesus’ mission is accomplished. Our sins have been paid for by His sacrificial death. Eternal life is certain because He rose from the dead. At His ascension into heaven, He was glorified returning to His Father’s presence with the glory that He had before the world existed.

However, we still live in the world. Life in this world is particularly difficult at this time. In addition to so much sickness, suffering, and death, Christians are under attack for their faith in God and trust in His word.

Still, we have comfort and peace. As our High Priest, Jesus has met all our needs of body and soul (Hebrews 7:26-27). Although Jesus is no longer physically and bodily in the world, He continues to pray for us. He continues to fulfill His priestly office of intercession (Hebrews 7:25). We are His, the sheep of His pasture. He guards and keeps us always.

One day, we, too, will be glorified when He will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body (Philippians 3:21). One day we will join with Clara Kitzinger, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven glorifying Jesus’ holy name, evermore praising God and singing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Until that time, Jesus prays to the Father, “that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26). God grant that to us all.

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

“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).

Prayers

- L** Let us pray. Lord God, Ruler of all, protect and defend us from every attack of the devil who prowls and seeks to devour. When tempts, strengthen us to resist his seductions and terrors; when he gains a foothold with false teaching or ungodly living, call us to repentance and holiness; and When he incites enemies against Your Word, preserve Your us in our faith.
- C** Amen.
- L** Heavenly Father, as the first Christians devoted themselves to prayer and worship following Jesus’ glorious ascension into heaven, preserve us in prayer and worship until we enter with all the saints into Your heavenly kingdom.
- C** Amen.
- L** Lord, bless the work of our missionaries. Bring forth Your harvest from the seeds they sow. Support those who endure fiery trials for Your name. As they shine the light of the Gospel into hostile darkness, guard, and protect them always.
- C** Amen.
- L** Lord, guide and give wisdom to our nation and its leaders, and to all judges and magistrates. Protect those who serve us as firefighters, police, disaster workers and medical personnel. Protect those in harm’s way because of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East that cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer. Grant that the newly found cease fire would be sustained.
- C** Amen.
- L** Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace sufficient for their needs according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.
- C** Amen.
- L** Lord God, heavenly Father, the devil continues to afflict us as a roaring lion seeking to devour us: We ask You to help us by the working of the Holy Spirit and to strengthen our hearts by Your Word so that our enemy may not prevail over us but that we may evermore abide in Your grace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- 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.

How Firm a Foundation

Lutheran Service Book 728, Lutheran Worship 411, The Lutheran Hymnal 427



1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,
2 "Fear not! I am with you, O be not dis - mayed,
3 "The soul that on Je - sus has leaned for re - pose
4 "When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way will lie,



Is laid for your faith in His ex - cel - lent Word!
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I will not, I will not, de - sert to his foes;
My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, will be your sup - ply.



What more can He say than to you He has said
I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
That soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,
The flames will not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign



Who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
Up - held by My righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
I'll nev - er, no nev - er, no nev - er, for - sake!
Your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine.

5 “Throughout all their lifetime My people will prove
My sov’ reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when gray hairs will their temples adorn,
Like lambs they will still in My bosom be borne.”

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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 Week of The Seventh Sunday of Easter May 18—May 23, 2026

Introduction

Most modern forms of meditation 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 meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

- 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; John 14:18

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

Introit Psalm 100:1–5; antiphon: Psalm 101:1

- L** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will make music.
- C** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
- L** Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- C** Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
- L** For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.
- 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** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

Have you ever been around people who sing while they work or putter around the house? It's almost always a sign of joy and happiness. Maybe they are in love. Or maybe, they are just simply enjoying life.

The real source of all joy and happiness is the Lord. He made us and gave us everything we have. In His goodness, He has given us our greatest gift of all, His steadfast love.

The Hebrew word that the ESV translates as "steadfast love" is difficult for us to put into English. The King James Version uses the word "mercy." Other translations use "loving-kindness," "unfailing love," "faithful love," and more.

It is this mercy and love that moved God to send us a savior in the person of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. It is our reason for making a joyful noise unto the Lord.

It is somewhat common for people to say, "Be happy. God loves you." This is certainly true but God's steadfast love is so much more. It's His love for us that moves Him to put into action His plan of salvation and open the kingdom of heaven to us and all believers.

Because of this, I will sing of His steadfast love and make music. I will serve the Lord with gladness because His mercy endures forever.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your steadfast love in Jesus. Let me never tire of singing Your praise for the salvation that You have granted to me through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

Tuesday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** His is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

- 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; John 14:18

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

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

The Easter season is one long celebration of triumph and victory over sin, death, and the devil. As the hymn writer declares:

Easter triumph, Easter joy!
This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,
Newborn souls in You to be.
Alleluia!

The final stanza to our celebration of Jesus' triumph is His ascension into heaven when He again takes up His crown at the right hand of God, the Father. Now that the celebration is over, what will happen? Jesus doesn't abandon us but sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to be with us as we continue our journey through life.

Jesus continues His ministry upon the earth through His faithful people. It is our words and deeds that bring the reality of Christ into the lives of others. Without the Holy Spirit, we would never be able to do this work.

In a few short days, we will celebrate Pentecost, the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. If you ever feel lonely and abandoned, allow the Holy Spirit to come to you through word and sacrament.

Prayer: Lord, You have pledged to us Your Spirit and promised to supply Your Church with pastors who will preach and teach Your Word. Give us ears to hear and hearts to believe Your Word. Raise up those who will serve Your Church in generations to come, that we may never be without the aid of those to serve us in Your name. Amen.

Wednesday

L Christ is Risen!
C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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; John 14:18

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

Psalm 68:1-10

L ¹God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;
and those who hate him shall flee before him!
C ²As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;
as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!
L ³But the righteous shall be glad;
they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!
C ⁴Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;
his name is the LORD; exult before him!
L ⁵Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
C ⁶God settles the solitary in a home;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.
L ⁷O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,
C ⁸the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
L ⁹Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished;
C ¹⁰your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

Psalm 68 is fascinating. I don't think that I have looked as closely at it as I did today.

The entire psalm is 35 verses long. If you read it in the ESV Bible, you will notice that it is divided into nine parts. It almost seems that each of the nine divisions could stand alone as a short psalm. Our reading for this week (verses 1-10) consists of the first three sections.

At the risk of oversimplification, the message of this psalm is that God is powerful, He works for the benefit of His people by defeating their enemies, and His people rejoice and sing His praises.

In a certain sense, this is the message of the entire Bible. Our enemy:

The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
 Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;

But for us fights the valiant One,
 Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
 Of Sabaoth Lord,
 And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.

From LSB 656, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,
Portions of stanzas 1 & 2
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Prayer: O Lord, grant that we would always sing praises to Your name. Help us to lift up our voices in song and to rejoice before You for the salvation won for us by Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Note: If you have the *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* available to you, I would recommend that you read the introduction to Psalm 68, penned by Walter Roehrs.

Thursday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

- 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; John 14:18

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

Acts 1:12–26

¹²Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And 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. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“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. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(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. ¹⁹And 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.) ²⁰For 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.’

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



“KEEP CALM and CARRY ON” is a poster printed in 1939 by the British government in preparation for World War II. It was meant to raise the morale of the people. It has recently been reproduced and modified many times to meet a variety of circumstances.

It seems that this was the motto of the disciples following Jesus’ ascension into heaven. Luke records that when they returned from the Mount of Olives to the upper room, the apostles carried on with their business. The first item on their agenda was finding a replacement for Judas. There was one requirement. The disciple must have been with them the entire time of Jesus’ public ministry, from His baptism by John until His ascension.

Two were chosen as candidates. There may have been more available. This we do not know but it does seem likely. They then trusted God to make the selection through the casting of lots.

When we select pastors today, we follow a similar procedure. We put forth candidates that are qualified and then trust God to make the selection. Although we do not cast lots, we do trust God to make the selection through the process of voting.

Matthias was chosen and numbered with the eleven apostles. His job was to be exactly what Jesus had directed: Be a witness to the resurrection.

Although the apostles are not here with us today, their witness to the resurrection is. We call it the New Testament. We need no further revelation from God.

We, today, in the face of our current difficulties and distress, are like the apostles. We must “Keep Calm and Carry On.” We do this by continuing our business of being Jesus’ witnesses. We tell others about Him and His work of salvation and the gift of eternal life.

Prayer: Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into heaven, you left a task for His apostles to complete, to make disciples of all nations. Grant that we may keep calm and carry on with that task, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L Christ is Risen!

C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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; John 14:18

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

C Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Today, we end our readings from the first epistle of Peter. Some have characterized this letter as the Epistle of Hope. This reading continues that theme.

Should we be surprised when life is difficult? No. Some Christians believe that having faith in Christ is the ticket to health and prosperity. Some TV evangelists preach a message that faith leads to freedom from all of life’s troubles. This would seem bizarre to the Apostle Peter. He had heard Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and

His words recorded in Matthew 5:

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:10-12).

Peter warns us to not be surprised when trials come or think that it is strange! If Christ suffered, then why wouldn't His followers?

Yet at the proper time, the mighty hand of God will exalt you! Until then, cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you! We may suffer for a little while but the God of all grace has called you to His eternal glory in Christ!

Prayer: Lord God, heavenly Father, grant us the strength to resist the devil, who prowls about like a roaring lion. Let us stand firm in our faith knowing that our present suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory that awaits us in heaven. Until that time help us to cast all of our cares upon You, knowing that You care for us and will neither leave us or forsake us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

L Christ is Risen!

C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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; John 14:18

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

C Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

Gradual adapted 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.

Today is the last day of the Easter season. It is the last time we will use this gradual, the Easter hymns, and readings.

But wait! Easter is not over! The early Christians moved their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week, so that they could celebrate Easter every week!

Every Sunday of the Church Year is a little Easter! So if you find yourself singing an Easter hymn, you are not alone.

In fact, every day is an Easter celebration. Every day, we rejoice that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and the devil on the cross. Every day, we rejoice that the tomb is empty and Jesus has risen from the dead. Every day, rejoice that because He lives we shall live forever in Paradise with Him.

Prayer: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, let our gladness have no end, alleluia! Amen.

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Lutheran Service Book 457, Lutheran Worship 127, The Lutheran Hymnal 199



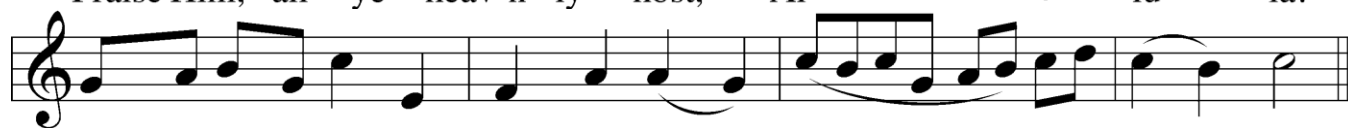
1 Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
3 But the pains which He en - dured, Al - le - lu - ia!
4 Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - le - lu - ia!



Our tri - um - phant ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!
Un - to Christ, our heav'n - ly king, Al - le - lu - ia!
Our sal - va - tion have pro - cured; Al - le - lu - ia!
Praise e - ter - nal as His love; Al - le - lu - ia!



Who did once up - on the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!
Who en - dured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!
Now a - bove the sky He's king, Al - le - lu - ia!
Praise Him, all ye heav'n - ly host, Al - le - lu - ia!



Suf - fer to re - deem our loss. Al - le - lu - ia!
Sin - ners to re - deem and save. Al - le - lu - ia!
Where the an - gels ev - er sing. Al - le - lu - ia!
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia!

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