

The Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 29, 2022

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!

Glorious Things of You Are Spoken

Lutheran Service Book 648, Lutheran Worship 294, The Lutheran Hymnal 469



1 Glo - rious things of you are spo - ken, Zi - on, cit - y
2 See, the streams of liv - ing wa - ters, Spring - ing from e -
3 Round each hab - i - ta - tion hov - 'ring, See the cloud and
4 Sav - ior, since of Zi - on's cit - y I through grace a



of our God; He whose word can - not be bro - ken Formed you
ter - nal love, Well sup - ply your sons and daugh - ters And all
fire ap - pear For a glo - ry and a cov - 'ring, Show - ing
mem - ber am, Let the world de - ride or pit - y, I will



for His own a - bode. On the Rock of A - ges found - ed,
fear of want re - move. Who can faint while such a riv - er
that the Lord is near. Thus de - riv - ing from their ban - ner
glo - ry in Your name. Fad - ing are the world's vain plea - sures,



What can shake your sure re - pose? With sal - va - tion's
 Ev - er will their thirst as - suage? Grace, which like the
 Light by night and shade by day, Safe they feed up -
 All their boast - ed pomp and show; Sol - id joys and



walls sur - round - ed, You may smile at all your foes.
 Lord, the giv - er, Nev - er fails from age to age.
 on the man - na Which God gives them on their way.
 last - ing trea - sures None but Zi - on's chil - dren know.

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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 61:3, 5–8; antiphon Psalm 61:1

L Hear my cry, O God,
 listen to my prayer;

C for you have been my refuge,
 a strong tower against the enemy.

L For you, O God, have heard my vows;
 you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

C Prolong the life of the king;
 may his years endure to all generations!

L May he be enthroned forever before God;
 appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

- C** So will I ever sing praises to your name,
as I perform my vows day after day.
- 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 my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;

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 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 133

L ¹Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

C ²**It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!**

L ³It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!

C **For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.**

Revelation 22:1–6, 12–20

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

¹²Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

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

John 17:20–26

L The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 17th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁰[Jesus said:] “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

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.

O Word of God Incarnate

Lutheran Service Book 523, Lutheran Worship 335, The Lutheran Hymnal 294



1 O Word of God in - car-nate, O Wis - dom from on high,
2 The Church from You, dear Mas-ter, Re-ceived the gift di - vine;
3 O make Your Church, dear Sav-ior, A lamp of bur - nished gold



O Truth un - changed, un - chang - ing, O Light of our dark sky:
And still that light is lift - ed O'er all the earth to shine.
To bear be - fore the na - tions Your true light as of old!



We praise You for the ra - diance That from the hal - lowed page,
It is the chart and com - pass That, all life's voy - age through,
O teach Your wan - d'ring pil - grims By this their path to trace



A lan - tern to our foot - steps, Shines on from age to age.
Mid mists and rocks and quick-sands Still guides, O Christ, to You.
Till, clouds and dark - ness end - ed, They see You face to face!

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Devotional thoughts:

A few years ago, I shook hands with a gentleman who then paused and told me, “I once shook hands with a man who shook hands with Winston Churchill.” After I thought about it for a while, I realized that Winston Churchill shook hands with Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin, and countless other famous people! I am only two people away from Winston Churchill and three people away from countless other famous people!

You may have heard of the idea called “Six Degrees of Separation.” It states that all people are six or fewer social connections away from each other. It is also known as the Six Handshakes Rule. I think six may be a high estimate.

Our Gospel lesson for this week begins in the middle of John 17. John 17 is known as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer. This prayer can be divided into three parts. In John 17:1-5, Jesus prays for Himself. In the second part, John 17:6-19, Jesus prays for His disciples. In our Gospel lesson, John 17:20-26, Jesus prays for us.

Verse 20 is one of my favorite Bible passages. In it, Jesus says, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.” Jesus is praying for everyone who will believe in Him through the word of the Apostles.

Some unbelievers criticize us by claiming that the message of Jesus has been lost through the centuries because it was handed down from one generation to the next. However, this comment is made out of ignorance. In fact, we believe because of the word of the Apostles. They walked with Jesus. They saw all of His miracles. They heard of all of His teachings. When we read the Gospels, we are hearing directly from the people who knew Jesus.

When Jesus prayed for the people who would believe in Him through their word, He was praying for us. We believe in Jesus because of the words they wrote in the Bible. When you read the New Testament, Jesus' disciples are speaking directly to you!

They saw Jesus turning water into wine. They witnessed the lame walking, the deaf hearing, the blind seeing, and the dead being raised to life. They shared the Last Supper with Jesus in the upper room. They saw Him arrested in the garden. They heard the hammer blows as nails attached Him to the cross. They saw the sky darkened. They heard Jesus say, "Father, forgive them" and "It is finished." They saw Him breathe His last and felt the earthquake. They ran to the tomb and found it empty early in the morning on the first day of the week.

They are the ones who wrote about Jesus so that you would believe! Jesus was praying for you when He said, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word."

I don't know how or when you first came to faith. But when you did, you came to faith through the word of the Apostles! We do not need new revelation. God is not speaking new things today that He hasn't said before. His word doesn't change. It remains true forever.

When you meet people who don't believe in Jesus and they ask you about Him. You can tell them with confidence, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). These are not your words but Jesus' words recorded by His beloved disciple.

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).

L Almighty God, You have given us this good land as our heritage. We give You thanks for the men and women of our armed forces who have given the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom. Grant that we would never forget them and their love for our nation and its flag. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Grant that we, who came from many nations with many different languages, may become a united people. Support us in defending our liberties, and give those to whom we have entrusted the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, may our hearts be thankful, and in troubled times do not let our trust in You fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord..

C Amen.

L Almighty God, heavenly Father, Your Son obeyed Your will for the sake of our salvation. Through Your Spirit, give Your Church on earth unity of faith, that the world may know that You sent Your Son to rescue us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during this pandemic. As we are experiencing an increase in the number of new infections, continue to strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from this illness or others. Be with those who mourn. Grant to them the hope and assurance of a blessed reunion in heaven.

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.

Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast

Lutheran Service Book 577, Lutheran Worship 342, The Lutheran Hymnal 49



1 Al - might - y God, Your Word is cast Like
2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe This
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares The
4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, Life -



seed in - to the ground; Now let the dew of
ho - ly seed re - move, But give it root in
ris - ing plant de - stroy, But let it yield a
giv - ing grace be - stow That all whose souls the



heav'n de - scend And righ - teous fruits a - bound.
ev - 'ry heart To bring forth fruits of love.
hun - dred - fold The fruits of peace and joy.
truth re - ceive Its sav - ing pow'r may know.

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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 Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 30 – June 4, 2022

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 meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday – Memorial Day (United States)

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

Introit Psalm 61:3, 5–8; antiphon Psalm 61:1

- L** Hear my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;
G for you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.
L For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
G Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!
L May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!
G So will I ever sing praises to your name,
as I perform my vows day after day.
G 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 my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;

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

Today is Memorial Day. It was originally known as Decoration Day. Decoration Day began during and after the Civil War when families and loved ones decorated the graves of soldiers who died in the Civil War.

The grief and loss experienced in our country because of the Civil War dead has never been greater. At least 620,000 young American men died during the Civil War. I said, “at least” because recent studies of census records indicate that the real figure is closer to 750,000. In addition, the population of the United States was only 31.4 million at that time. The next most deadly war for America was World War II when 405,000 Americans died. By that time the U.S. population had grown to 132 million!

This may help you understand why Memorial Day has transitioned from an important solemn holiday in our nation to one that marks the beginning of summer revelry. Very few living Americans have experienced the devastating loss of a young soldier who was killed in the defense of our country and its freedoms.

The words of Psalm 61 from our introit for this week are appropriate for this occasion. It was written by King David during a civil war in Israel. His son, Absalom, had gathered an army and attempted to overthrow his father and make himself king. The threat was so real that David was forced to flee from Jerusalem.

During the American Civil War, brother fought against brother. This is a terrible thing. It was even more terrible for David that his own son sought to kill him and take the throne. It is no wonder that he began Psalm 61 with these words, “Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer.”

I am sure that countless soldiers have uttered similar words. Grieving mothers, fathers, and spouses have also called out to God when they learned of their soldier’s death.

One verse of Psalm 61 that didn’t make it into the introit is particularly appropriate for Memorial Day. In verse 4, David says, “Let me dwell in your tent forever!”

The lives of too many young men and women have come to an untimely end as a result of war. Lives full of unrealized potential are cut short. But David reminds us that believers will live with the Lord forever. This is why Jesus came into the world.

Jesus came to redeem a rebellious world. He paid for our sins on the cross and rose again from the dead so that we may “dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).

Let us pray. Almighty God, You have given us this good land as our heritage. We give You thanks for the men and women of our armed forces who have given the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom. Grant that we would never forget them and their love for our nation and its flag. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Grant that we, who came from many nations with many different languages, may become a united people. Support us in defending our liberties, and give those to whom we have entrusted the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, so that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, may our hearts be thankful, and in troubled times do not let our trust in You fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. 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; 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. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 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.

Have you ever heard of life here on earth referred to as “a vale of tears”? The collect for this week spurred my curiosity about this phrase. In this prayer, we ask God to not leave us without consolation. Because life is filled with tears and sadness, we need constant consolation from God. It is not without reason that Christians have long called our earthly life a “valley of tears.”

The term “vale of tears” comes from some translations of Psalm 84:6. Martin Luther’s translation of this verse reads “*die durch das Jammertal gehen und machen daselbst Brunnen; und die Lehrer werden mit viel Segen geschmückt.*” When translated to English it says, “Who pass through the vale (valley) of tears and make wells there; and the teachers will be adorned with many blessings.” A few English translations also read “valley of tears” but most of the newer translations prefer “the Valley of Baca.”

The difficulty comes from trying to understand the meaning of the Hebrew phrase, “*emeq habbakha*” or Valley of Baca. Other than this single reference, this valley is unknown. Some think that the term Baca may refer to a shrub or plant. On the other hand, Baca could come from the Hebrew word *bakhah*, “to weep.” Because of the uncertainty, many English versions chose to leave the word untranslated, hence the word Bacca. This is how “vale of tears” was lost from our Bibles.

Nevertheless, it has been part of our Christian vocabulary since the beginning. The Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint or LXX) has “valley of weeping” in this verse. The Septuagint was translated from Hebrew into Greek more than 200 years before Jesus was born and was used by the first Greek-speaking Christians.

Has life ever felt like a vale of tears for you? It is impossible to live life without tears. Some of us have more and some of us have less. But we all weep. Jesus wept (John 11:35). He wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. If it’s okay for Jesus to cry at a death of a loved one, it is certainly okay for us to cry when someone we love dies. Jesus knew that he would raise Lazarus from the dead. He still wept. We know that our believing loved ones will be raised from the dead but we still weep. We live in a valley of tears.

We survive in this vale of tears because God gives us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Paraclete. He is there in times of sorrow. He comforts us with the assurance of the salvation that Jesus won for us on the cross.

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.

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

Psalm 133

- L** ¹Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
- C** ²**It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!**
- L** ³It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!
- C** **For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.**

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. |

I cannot get through a hot summer day without quietly singing to myself:

Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer
Those days of soda and pretzels and beer
Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer
Dust off the sun and moon and sing a song of cheer

This song was released by Nat King Cole in 1963 and reached number 6 on the Billboard Hot 100. I think it should have been number one!

It's a fun and clever song. It is a song of cheer. My brothers and sisters and I particularly liked singing the word "BEER"!

But it's not the lyrics, the catchy melody, or even the silky smooth voice of Nat King Cole that brings this song to mind. It's the memory of three in the front and four in the back riding through northern Michigan to begin our summer vacation. When we heard this song on the radio, no matter how much we were bickering, we all stopped and sang together, "Roll out the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer."

There is something about singing together that helps us connect to each other. One of the most pleasant parts of retirement is the opportunity to sit with my wife, Valerie, and sing hymns together in church on Sunday morning. For more than 40 years, I was in the front and she was in the pew and we didn't have this opportunity.

When we returned to church after the greatest threat of Covid had passed, we continued to watch our services online. Our Sunday morning routine is to watch the 8 a.m. service and attend the 10:45 a.m. service each week. From this experience, I have become convinced that video streaming will never replace in-person worship. There is nothing that compares to singing hymns with fellow believers. This brings me to Psalm 133.

In our Gospel lesson this week, Jesus prays, "that they may all be one." Psalm 133 is titled, "A Song of Ascents. Of David." It was sung by the faithful people of God as they traveled up to Jerusalem and up to the temple on their way to worship at the annual festivals.

It begins, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" I can imagine how good and pleasant it was when the bands of pilgrims would join together in singing songs on their journey.

I have often thought that I would like to walk from Jericho to Jerusalem. Jericho is 846 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 2,474 feet above sea level. It is a 25-mile walk through a barren and dry region. Even without the current political issues, it would be difficult. But it would be good and pleasant to do this while singing songs of praise to God in unity. This was Jesus' prayer. Psalm 133 celebrates this unity!

In Christ, we are all one. We have all sinned. We have been forgiven. We all together rejoice in the salvation that Jesus won for us on the cross.

Let us pray. O Lord, thank You for making us one holy Christian and apostolic Church. Grant that we would live as one body of Christ, faithfully clinging to His word of truth without error or false doctrine, bearing one another's burdens in love 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; 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. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 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

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.

I once served as the circuit counselor in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The circuit counselor served as the representative of the district president in the call process when congregations were calling their next pastor. (For reasons unknown to me, circuit counselors are now called circuit visitors.)

At a Call Meeting in a small congregation, the selection of the next pastor had narrowed to two pastors. Both were well qualified. In a series of repeated votes, both pastors were tied after each ballot.

It appeared that no decision was going to be reached at that meeting. I thought it was wise that we recess the meeting for two weeks to allow time to seek God’s direction through prayer.

When I returned, two weeks later, a woman suggested to me that we cast lots as the Apostles did to select Matthias to become an Apostle. This certainly would be an honorable option. However, it was not the process appointed by the congregation’s constitution to be used for selecting the next pastor.

The meeting was short. Apparently, there had been more than just prayer happening over the previous two weeks. One of the two pastors was selected almost unanimously!

It turned out that the woman who suggested casting lots had preferred the other candidate. Casting lots was her last-ditch effort to secure her favorite as the next pastor!

God certainly can use the casting of lots to choose between two equally qualified candidates. He can also use the election process when it is conducted with integrity. In some denominations, pastors are placed in congregations by bishops. God can use that process, too.

We pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy will be done.” That is always the prayer of every Christian. God uses a variety of people and circumstances to bring about His will. We as His children always believe that His will is the best.

I imagine that Joseph called Barsabbas was disappointed that he wasn’t chosen to be an apostle. But I also believe that he was willing to accept that this wasn’t God’s will for his life.

You, too, may experience disappointment. We all do. The challenge is to remember that God can and does work through our disappointments to bring about His will and our blessings.

The cross stood in the middle of the road on the way to Jesus’ resurrection. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that a different way might be found. Then He prayed, “Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). Jesus knew that God’s will is always best.

When we face crosses in our lives, may we also pray, “Not my will, but yours, be done” as we allow God to guide all our decisions and activities.

Prayer: Almighty God, heavenly Father, You guided the Apostles to select Matthias to be the twelfth apostle. We pray that You would continue to guide Your people in our decisions so that Your will would be done and Your kingdom would come. 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; 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. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

Kyrie

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

Revelation 22:1–6, 12–20

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

¹²Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

April 27, 2025, is the next time Revelation will occur in the regular Sunday readings. That is the second Sunday of Easter in three years.

(In the interest of full disclosure, readings from Revelation do appear in the Bible selections for Feasts and Festivals [pages xxii-xxiii in Lutheran Service Book]. We read Revelation 14:6-7 as our first reading each year at the celebration of the Reformation. We read Revelation 7:2-17 for All Saints’ Day. For those who observe it, Revelation 1:1-6 is read on December 27 for St. John’s Day, and Revelation 14:1-5 is read on December 28 for Holy Innocents Day.]

Vizzini: He didn’t fall?! Inconceivable!

Inigo Montoya: You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.

Fans of the film “The Princess Bride,” will recognize that exchange. It is one of the many memorable quotes from the movie.

That quotation came to mind as I prepared to write a meditation on Revelation (possibly for the final time). Individuals and denominations have suggested some very strange interpretations to Revelation. It seems that people are willing to make it say whatever they want it to say. To many of those folks, I would like to say, “I do not think it means what you think it means.”

When you read Revelation, remember it doesn’t say anything different from what the rest of the Bible says. We should not look to Revelation for bizarre and outlandish doctrines or ideas. If you find something that you don’t understand, simply trust that it is saying what the rest of the Bible says that you do understand.

But there is much in Revelation that we do understand. It tells us how wonderful God is and how God is working in the world for our ultimate salvation.

Revelation may have some difficult visions. It was written to a young Church going through difficult times. Most of the symbolic language of Revelation was very familiar to these early Christians. But much of it is as

clear today as it was when John first wrote these words. Times will be difficult, but God ultimately wins the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The last time the world saw the Tree of Life is was in the paradise of the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3, we are told that the cherubim guard the way to the Tree of Life. The next time we will see it is in the New Jerusalem of heaven as described in Revelation 22.

Take heart, even in difficult times! One day, Jesus will come to take us to be with Him in paradise where the river of the water of life will flow and the Tree of Life will yield its fruit each month! Come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus. Dwell with us now, even as You have promised to be with us always. Grant us faith that one day You will come again to take us to be with You to live in paradise forever. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

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.

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

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Acts 1:12–14

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.

Today is the last day of the Easter Season! It began with mighty “Alleluias” celebrating Jesus’ resurrection. It has continued for seven weeks. Tomorrow is Pentecost.

Today is not only the last day of the Easter Season; it is also the last day of the first half of the Church Year. During this half of the Church Year that began with Advent, we have been focusing on the earthly life and ministry of Jesus.

In Advent, we anticipated His birth by reviewing the prophecies of the Old Testament. We also reviewed the life of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for Jesus’ ministry.

We celebrated Jesus’ birth at Christmas. We stood with the shepherds and heard the angels sing, “Glory to God in the highest. Peace on Earth. Good will toward men.”

On Epiphany, we remembered the star guiding the wise men from the east until it came to rest over the house where Jesus was. We joined them in worshiping the newborn King as they offered Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

The Epiphany season continued at the Jordan River. At Jesus' baptism, we heard God's voice declare from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." We saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him in the form of a dove.

Throughout Epiphany, we saw more and more evidence in His miracles that Jesus is indeed God of God and Light of Light. The Epiphany Season concluded with a climb to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. We witnessed Jesus' face shine like the sun. His clothes became as white as white could be as He spoke with Moses and Elijah. We again heard the Father's voice declare, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."

Beginning with Ash Wednesday, our thoughts turned to the cross throughout the season of Lent. We were reminded of the importance of repentance and returning to God. We set aside our joyful "alleluias" as we pondered the suffering and death of our Savior who died because of our sins.

We began Holy Week by singing "Hosanna" and waving palm branches with the crowds. We saw Jesus our king coming to us humble, and mounted on a donkey. We sat with the disciples and heard Jesus say, "Take, eat. This is my body. Take and drink. This is my blood." We heard Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

We followed to the judgment hall. We saw Pilate release Barabbas and give in to the demands of crowds that shouted, "Crucify Him."

On Calvary's holy mountain, we witnessed soldiers divide His clothes among themselves. We saw Jesus' head bowed and His arms stretched out upon the cross. We heard Him speak seven times, even asking that the Father would grant forgiveness to his executioners and finally declaring, "It is finished!"

Early on the first day of the week, we walked silently with the women to His grave. We wondered who would roll away the stone. We saw the angel and heard him say, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said."

A week ago Thursday, we turned our eyes skyward and saw Jesus ascend into the clouds of heaven. We know that He will return again in the clouds the same way we saw Him go.

Now what? The Easter Season never really ends. Every Sunday is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. We sing, "Alleluia" each time we remember Jesus' life and ministry in the reading of the Gospel lesson.

But now, during the second half of the Church year, we will learn about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and each of us as individual Christians. The color for this half of the Church year is green as we focus on Christian growth.

In Acts 1:14, we read, "These with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers." This is the last time we hear of Mary the mother of Jesus. Beyond that notice what the disciples did. They devoted themselves to prayer!

This is an excellent example for us during this second half of the Church Year. May we devote ourselves to prayer now and always as we await the return of Jesus.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the life and ministry of Your Beloved Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Grant us the grace to always celebrate Jesus' resurrection as we devote ourselves to prayer and the study of Your holy word. Amen.

L Christ is risen! Alleluia!

C Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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