

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

The Third Sunday after Epiphany January 24, 2021

National Lutheran Schools Week
January 25-29, 2021



On this Third Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord we remember that during His life on earth, Jesus was particularly interested in children. We must echo our Lord's concern and follow His mandate to raise our children in the Christian faith. Some of us have the privilege of sending our children to Christian schools. Others of us must fulfill this obligation in other ways. We pray that we all will take up this crucial task with enthusiasm and joy so that little lambs for who the savior died would be welcomed into His loving arms.

If you have children in your home, consider giving them a leadership role in this service.



1 Shep - herd of ten - der youth, Guid - ing in
 2 You are the ho - ly Lord, O all - sub -
 3 You are the great High Priest; You have pre -
 4 O ev - er be our guide, Our shep - herd,



love and truth Through de - vious ways; Christ, our tri -
 du - ing Word, Heal - er of strife. Your - self You
 pared the feast Of ho - ly love; And in our
 and our pride, Our staff and song. Je - sus, O



um - phant king, We come Your name to sing
 did a - base That from sin's deep dis - grace
 mor - tal pain None calls on You in vain;
 Christ of God, By Your en - dur - ing Word



And here our chil - dren bring To join Your praise.
 You so might save our race And give us life.
 Our plea do not dis - dain; Help from a - bove.
 Lead us where You have trod; Make our faith strong.

5 So now, and till we die,
 Sound we Your praises high
 And joyful sing:
 Infants and all the throng,
 Who to the Church belong,
 Unite to swell the song
 To Christ, our king!

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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 113:1–2, 4, 7–8; antiphon Psalm 113:3

L From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised!

C Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the Lord!

L Blessèd be the name of the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore!

C The Lord is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!

L He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

C to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.

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 From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised!

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: Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Jonah 3:1–5, 10

¹Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” ³So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. . . .

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the LORD, all nations!
- C** Extol him, all peoples!
- L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,
- C** and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
- L** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
- C** bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Psalm 62

- L** ¹For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.
- C** ²**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.**
- L** ³How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
- C** ⁴**They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.**
- L** ⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.
- C** ⁶**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**
- L** ⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
- C** ⁸**Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.**
- L** ⁹Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.
- C** ¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**
- L** ¹¹Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,
- C** ¹²**and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.**
- For you will render to a man according to his work.**

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

²⁹This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:15

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Repent and believe in the gospel. Alleluia.

Mark 1:14–20

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1st chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

¹⁶Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

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 Oh, blest the house, what - e'er be - fall, Where Je - sus
2 Oh, blest that house where faith is found And all in
3 Oh, blest the par - ents who give heed Un - to their
4 Oh, blest that house; it pros - pers well. In peace and
5 Then here will I and mine to - day A sol - emn



Christ is all in all! A home that is not whol - ly
hope and love a - bound; They trust their God and serve Him
chil - dren's fore - most need And wea - ry not of care or
joy the par - ents dwell, And in their chil - dren's lives is
prom - ise make and say: Though all the world for - sake His



His— How sad and poor and dark it is!
still And do in all His ho - ly will!
cost. May none to them and heav'n be lost!
shown How rich - ly God can bless His own.
Word, I and my house will serve the Lord!

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Devotional thoughts:

How do you learn? They say experience is the best teacher.

My best year of learning was my experience serving as a vicar for Pastor Eldor Haake. In our church, a vicar is an intern from the seminary working with an experienced pastor in a congregation. In the best of circumstances, this pastor takes a young and inexperienced student and guides him in learning how to fulfill a lifelong vocation of service to the Lord and His Church.

Although it seems like yesterday, it has been forty-five years since I was a vicar at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois. I can still clearly recall the wisdom and sage advice that I received from Pastor Haake.

During this week of honoring Christian education, Lutheran schools, teachers, and students, I can see Pastor Haake, take his pipe from the corner of his mouth and share with me this proverb. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6 KJV).

It is a great privilege and responsibility to be a parent. I can recall driving home from the hospital (in the days before car seats.) My wife had our newborn child in her arms. I then first experienced the full weight of this assignment from God on my shoulders. Could I, would I be a good father?

I know that young parents often share this experience. With joy and some trepidation, we take up the task of teaching our children the essentials of life. Near the beginning of the list come shapes and colors. At the same time, we assist them in rolling, sitting, standing, and walking. We choose a language for them to speak (wink) when we coach them to say “mama” or “dada.”

Soon we are rolling balls back and forth, stacking blocks, and knocking them down. Along the way, they are drawing, coloring, and learning to sing. We help them to share and say, “please and thank you.”

Eventually, they begin school, organized sports, and dance. We help them with math and science, history and literature. Reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic occupy most of their waking hours.

This is a bittersweet experience. We want them to grow to become successful adults. But when they do, we know that they will be on their own, no longer needing to have us by their side.

You may have noticed that this scenario lacks one important ingredient. We never would forget to teach our children to walk and talk. It would be irresponsible to let them grow up without learning to read and write. Yet, many parents are slow in introducing their children to Jesus.

Christian parents have a goal that is even more important than helping their children become successful adults. Christian parents want to spend eternity with their children in heaven. Childhood is the opportunity given to us to teach our children to know their savior.

We begin with simple songs such as, “Jesus loves me, this I know For the Bible tells me so.” We teach them their prayers for meals and bedtime. We give them Bible storybooks and teach them the Lord’s Prayer. We take them to church and help them with the service. They learn the important truths of Christmas and Easter. They learn of God’s love and forgiveness through faith in Jesus.

Yet at some point, our ability to teach the Christian faith to our children needs assistance. I did not have the skill to teach my children everything necessary for them to become successful and productive adults. Valerie and I had to send them to school. Likewise, few of us are equipped to fully train our children in the Christian faith. Fortunately, for my family, we were able to gain assistance in this important task by enrolling our children in Christ Lutheran School where every day they learned more and more about Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection. They learned about the forgiveness of sins. They learned to pray. They learned the Bible and its teachings.

Many parents do not have this option. But the mandate is still there to “Train up a child in the way he should go.” I pray that God would grant such parents an extra measure of wisdom and skill to teach their children to follow Jesus on the path to eternal life so that when they are old, they “will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6 KJV).

“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 Heavenly Father, mercifully bless the Christian education of our children that they may grow in faith to the praise of Your holy name. Bless Lutheran schools wherever they may be and all other places where our children are brought closer to You. Encourage our congregations to support those who teach and those who learn. Give joy to all teachers, and give them the privilege of seeing the fruits of their labors; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

L Lord God, heavenly Father, Your Son gathered the little children to Himself that He might bless them. Strengthen parents that they may faithfully bring up their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord by a life of prayer and devotion to You and Your Word. Bless the work of Sunday School teachers and all who assist parents in teaching the faith to children, that all might be led into the Savior’s loving arms and grow to lead godly lives to the praise and honor of Christ’s holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.

We Have Been Sent to Serve

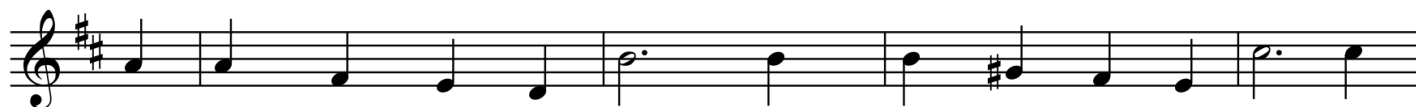
"Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28 ESV)



1 We have been sent to serve By Christ, our Ser - vant King,
2 No long - er slaves to sin We serve in low - li - ness.
3 To those who are ig - nored, Who live with trou - bled hearts,
4 Our ran - som has been paid For Christ, who con - quered death,
Δ 5 To God the Fa - ther sing A high dox - ol - o - gy;



Who gave His life that we might live; New life to oth - ers bring.
Through Word and wa - ter we be - gin A life of ho - li - ness.
May we, as ser - vants of the LORD, Tend them till fear de - parts.
Rose from the grave, came to our aid, With His life - sav - ing breath.
Un - to Christ Je - sus ev - er bring A hymn sung glo - r'ous - ly!



Our Lord and Mas - ter's grace Im - pels each faith - ful one To
May we, through ser - vant - hood, Pro - claim Lord Je - sus' love, So
May they, by grace, be blest Through faith in Je - sus Christ, Who
He reigns as LORD of all; He shall re - turn a - gain. Un -
Then to the Spir - it raise Psalms of un - end - ing joy, As



hold the lost in His em - brace; Each daugh - ter, ev' - ry son!
all might know that God is good, And trust the LORD a - bove.
gave His life so all would rest In His great sac - ri - fice.
til His com - ing, heed His call That all might heav - en gain.
we, with will - ing spir - it, praise Our LORD and God on high!



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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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Note: National Lutheran Schools Week materials are available at <https://www.lcms.org/lutheranschoolsweek>

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 Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 25 – January 30, 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 meditate 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 113:1–2, 4, 7–8; antiphon Psalm 113:3

- L** From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised!
C Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the Lord!
L Blessèd be the name of the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore!
C The Lord is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!
L He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
C to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.
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 From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised!

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 recently heard a mother repeat this comment from her young daughter, “Mom, when will this war on germs be over?” I am sure that each of us in our own way has shared this same thought.

God has blessed me that I have been able to ride out this pandemic with a minimum of trouble when I compare my life to others. My heart aches for those in extended care facilities who cannot see their loved ones. I have compassion for medical personnel who are exhausted in their fight against this deadly disease. I have sympathy for those who have lost their jobs and their businesses. I respect teachers who must continue to instruct children in these trying times. I am particularly sad for children who have had their lives disrupted by the war on germs.

During this pandemic, one day runs into another. We all wonder when it will end. We feel helpless and out of control. We may believe that the bad and evil of this world have overcome the good and wholesome.

Psalm 113 reminds us that while we may be overwhelmed, God is not overwhelmed! He lifts up the poor and needy.

Much worse than this Covid-19 pandemic is the pandemic of sin and death in the world. God in Christ Jesus has come to heal us from this spiritual pandemic.

The time will come when our nation is vaccinated and Covid-19 will be a memory shared around the campfire. But sin will still infect the world. We will always need our savior. God always will triumph over sin and death. The Lord willing, the war on germs will be over soon. One day, the war on sin will be over too, when we enjoy life in the heavenly mansions with Jesus for all eternity.

L Let us pray. O Lord, we sometimes become discouraged by how slowly solutions come to the problems of life. Grant to us patience and trust that we may know that the ultimate victory is ours in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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: Mark 1:15

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Repent and believe in the gospel. 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: Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

One theme found in films and literature is the concept of the proud and arrogant being humbled. The more appalling their conceit and egotism is, the more satisfying is their ultimate humiliation. The danger of enjoying this kind of plot is the temptation for each of us to become proud of our own humility.

We each have our own infirmities and weaknesses. The first step in healing is a proper diagnosis. God’s law is there precisely to help us see our own faults and failures.

During this Lutheran Schools Week, I am reminded of a second-grade teacher who taught our children that when you point your finger at someone, four fingers are pointing back at you. The Pharisees of the New Testament had that problem. They were always pointing out the sin of others. Jesus spent much of His time exposing their hypocrisy. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus helped us to see the perfection that God's law demands not only of the Pharisees but also of you and me.

Once we recognize our personal failures, we are ready to ask God for mercy to heal us. We all need healing from sin, anger, arrogance, etc. Only God can heal us. It is for that reason that He sent Jesus to be the Great Physician of soul and body.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You 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: Mark 1:15

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.
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Psalm 62

- L** ¹For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.
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L ³How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
C ⁴**They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.**
L ⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.
C ⁶**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**
L ⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
C ⁸**Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.**
L ⁹Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.
C ¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**
L ¹¹Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,
C ¹²**and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.**

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. |

Over the years, I have become more and more distressed by the amount of legal gambling that is allowed and encouraged in our country. When I was a young and somewhat rebellious youth, I was not so certain that

legalized gambling was bad. But then one day, I witnessed something that brought this issue into focus for me.

I was standing in line at the checkout lane of a drug store. It was the middle of winter. The gentleman at the cash register in front of me had an obvious cold. I assumed that he was there to buy cough medicine.

As I stood there, I noticed that his clothes were ragged. There were holes in his gloves so that his fingertips stuck through the ends. He opened his wallet. While I know it is improper to pry into the affairs of others, I couldn't help but notice it only contained a single five-dollar bill. I expected him to ask for cough drops or cough syrup. Instead, he handed this single bill to the clerk and purchased a lottery ticket!

I couldn't blame him. The state-run lottery held out a false and misleading dream. He was deceived into spending the last of his cash in pursuing this dream. The state was responsible for depriving this man of his much-needed medicine. Someone was sure to win that long ago lottery and they were paid by this man's last five-dollar bill.

Gambling is a successful business for the state because there are always more losers than winners. Gambling is a successful business because we all are deceived into chasing the almighty dollar.

Psalm 62 reminds us not to trust in extortion or robbery. By extension, we also ought not to trust in wealth and riches.

Our only trust should be in God alone. From Him only comes our salvation. It doesn't come from lotteries and gambling. It doesn't come from wealth and riches. It is not granted to those who trust in their positions of power and prestige. It only comes to those who trust in Jesus for salvation.

Dollars may come and go from our hands but God is there for us throughout time and eternity. Trust in Him.

Prayer: O God, You alone are our Rock and Salvation. Grant that we would not trust in anything other than You, 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: Mark 1:15

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Repent and believe in the gospel. Alleluia.

Kyrie

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

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

Jonah 3:1–5, 10

¹Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” ³So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. . . .

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do

We all know the story of Jonah. Today, let us consider the story of Nineveh.

While there are some translation issues with Jonah 3:3 which you can explore by looking at the note in the ESV, Nineveh was a huge city. God sent Jonah to warn them of the coming judgment from God. It was a task that Jonah did not want. He did not want to go to Nineveh. He did not want them to repent. He did not want them to believe God. Let's not follow the example of Jonah. Let us learn from the people of Nineveh.

Unfortunately, our Old Testament lesson for this week omits verses 6-9. Here we learn that Jonah's message reached the highest levels. The king himself repented and ordered the people to turn from their evil ways. In verse 10, we learn that God saw their repentance and relented from the disaster that He had planned.

Through the voice of one man, God's word changed the hearts of the people of Nineveh. It started with the King and reached to the people on the street. Repentance is always a greater miracle than surviving for three days in the belly of a whale.

Repentance is something that none of us wants. We all want to feel secure in our decisions in life. Yes, repentance is necessary. It is necessary for others but not for us!

But God in His mercy brings His word into our ears. The Holy Spirit does what Luther calls his alien or foreign work. He brings us to repentance. And through repentance, God relents and grants us forgiveness, life, and salvation for the sake of His only-begotten Son, Jesus.

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for those who preach Your word. Grant that Your word would touch our hearts in such a way that we could come to repentance and receive the forgiveness promised to us through faith in 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: Mark 1:15

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Repent and believe in the gospel. 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.

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

²⁹This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Whole denominations are based on proclaiming the end of the world. We know that one day this world will end. Even scientists are constantly warning of coming destruction through climate change, nuclear holocaust, some future pandemic, or other such calamities.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about this. He reminded them that this world is passing away. We don't know when, but it is coming.

What is important to remember is that the world may end for each of us individually before it ends for the rest of the people. Our time on earth is limited. We ought not to become overly attached to the things of this

world. We are but pilgrims and strangers here. Heaven is our home!

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. In His Father's house are many mansions. Do not let your heart be troubled by the cares of this world. Set your mind on the things above.

Until we join in the heavenly choir, let us hear the words of St. Paul from the closing verses of 1 Corinthians, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen" (1 Corinthians 16:23-24).

Prayer: O Lord, we sometimes cling to tightly to this world with all of its troubles and cares. Grant that we may cast our cares upon You knowing that You care for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

L Praise the LORD, all nations!

C Extol him, all peoples!

L For great is his steadfast love toward us,

C and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

L Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Verse of the Day: Mark 1:15

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Repent and believe in the gospel. 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.

Mark 1:14–20

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

¹⁶Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

This is another week where I have saved the Gospel lesson for Saturday. Here we find Jesus picking up the baton from John the Baptist and beginning His ministry.

He begins it with the same words that were proclaimed by John, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." The time has come for God to reign. Come live in His kingdom. God's kingdom is not closed off to anyone. No matter how sinful your past life has been, you can enter His kingdom through repentance! This is good news indeed!

The task of proclaiming the kingdom of God is great. To help in this task, Jesus called Simon and Andrew, James and John, and the rest of the apostles. He called them to become fishers of men! They would be rescuing people from the kingdom of darkness and bringing them into the kingdom of light.

This task of bringing people into God's eternal kingdom continues today. Lutheran schools have been helping in this task since the beginning of our denomination more than 150 years ago. Countless pastors and teachers first were trained in the work of the kingdom through Lutheran schools and their effectiveness has been multiplied many times over by these faithful servants.

In addition, loyal and faithful lay people had also been trained to become fishers of men through the work and ministry of Lutheran Schools. People all over the world have been touched by the love of God in Christ Jesus because children once trained in the way they should go have continued in the way of following Jesus throughout their lives.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You the work and ministry of Lutheran schools. Grant that all of us would be moved to support this important ministry of training children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Make us all fishers of men that we may be used to bring people of every age into Your eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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