

The Last Sunday of the Church Year

November 20, 2022

No one knows the day or hour of Christ's return. He may come in the morning, or evening or midnight. Let us stay watchful by living in faith waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

A Time for Everything

¹For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

²a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

The end of the Church Year is a time for sober reflection and joyful expectation of Christ's return. There is a time for frivolity and merriment but this time of year is set aside for serious contemplation of our lives and the end times. As each day we see horrific news, we are reminded of the sinful world in which we live. We cling to Jesus' promise to return and bring an end to these evil days. We pray that by the working of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament that we will persevere in faith to the end. May we always cling to the cross of Christ for hope and peace.



1 O wor - ship the King, all - glo - rious a - bove.
 2 O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
 3 This earth, with its store of won - ders un - told,
 4 Thy boun - ti - ful care what tongue can re - cite?



O grate - ful - ly sing His pow'r and His love;
 Whose robe is the light, whose can - o - py space;
 Al - might - y, Thy pow'r hath found - ed of old,
 It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,



Our shield and de - fend - er, the An - cient of Days,
 His char - iots of wrath the deep thun - der - clouds form,
 Es - tab - lished it fast by a change - less de - cree,
 It streams from the hills, it de - scends to the plain,



Pa - vil - ioned in splen - dor and gird - ed with praise.
 And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.
 And round it hath cast, like a man - tle, the sea.
 And sweet - ly dis - tills in the dew and the rain.

5 Frail children of dust
 and feeble as frail,
 In Thee do we trust,
 nor find Thee to fail.
 Thy mercies, how tender,
 how firm to the end,
 Our maker, defender,
 redeemer, and friend!

6 O measureless Might,
 ineffable Love,
 While angels delight
 to hymn Thee above,
 Thy humbler creation,
 though feeble their lays,
 With true adoration
 shall sing to Thy praise.

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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 134; antiphon Psalm 33:8

- L** Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
C Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
who stand by night in the house of the Lord!
L Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord!
C May the Lord bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth!
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 Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

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: Lord Jesus Christ, You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Malachi 3:13–18

¹³“Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’

¹⁴You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts?’ ¹⁵And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.”

¹⁶Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. ¹⁷“They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

L These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

C They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

L Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

C in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Psalm 46

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

C ²**Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,**

L ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

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

L ⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

C ⁶**The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.**

L ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

C ⁸**Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.**

L ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;

he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

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

L ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;

C the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Colossians 1:13–20

¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse Luke 23:43

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. Alleluia.

Luke 23:27-43

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 23rd chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁷There followed [Jesus] a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' ³⁰Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

³²Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

³⁴And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

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.



1 "Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing," The watch - men on the
 2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, And all her heart with
 3 Now let all the heav'ns a - dore Thee, Let saints and an - gels



heights are cry - ing; "A - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, a - rise!"
 joy is spring - ing; She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.
 sing be - fore Thee With harp and cym - bals' clear - est tone.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es And at the thrill - ing
 For her Lord comes down all - glo - rious, The strong in grace, in
 Of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal, Where, join - ing with the



cry re - joic - es: "Oh, where are ye, ye vir - gins wise?
 truth vic - to - rious; Her star is ris'n, her light is come.
 choir im - mor - tal, We gath - er round Thy ra - diant throne.



The Bride - groom comes, a - wake! Your lamps with glad - ness take!
 Now come, Thou Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son,
 No eye has seen the light, No ear has heard the might



Al - le - lu - ia! With brid - al care Your - selves pre - pare
 Hail! Ho - san - na! We en - ter all The wed - ding hall
 Of Thy glo - ry; There - fore will we E - ter - nal - ly



To meet the Bride - groom, who is near."
 To eat the Sup - per at Thy call.
 Sing hymns of praise and joy to Thee!

Devotional thoughts:

Matthew 25:1-13 is the historic Gospel for the Last Sunday of the Church Year. It is Jesus' parable of the Five Foolish and Five Wise Virgins. I would encourage you to read this parable again this year as it has been the custom of Christians to hear these words of Jesus every year at this time.

Our Gospel lesson today in the three-year series comes from Luke 23. We meet Jesus on the *Via Dolorosa* which is Latin for The Way of Sorrows. Pilate has succumbed to pressure from the crowds yelling "Crucify him" and condemned Jesus to death. Simon of Cyrene has been forced to carry Jesus' cross to Calvary. In every sense of the word, the end is near.

Luke reports that a great multitude followed Him and the women were mourning and lamenting for Him. It is hard to overestimate their sorrow and grief. All of their hopes and dreams were being dashed.

Anticipating life's end can lead us to heartache and anguish. We may be filled with regrets or we may mourn our unfulfilled dreams. This can be so painful for some people that they will do anything to avoid thinking about it. This would be the height of folly.

The five foolish virgins were unprepared for the coming bridegroom. Not thinking about the end will leave us unprepared.

Jesus' entire life and ministry were focused on changing our destiny from death to life. The one who was born king of the Jews and sought by the wise men (Matthew 2:2) is now the King of the Jews nailed to the cross. He is the Lamb of God who, through His sacrifice, takes away the sin of the world. Wise people turn to Him. The foolish ridicule Him.

There were two criminals crucified with Jesus. One was foolish. The other one was wise.

The foolish one ridiculed Jesus saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

We live in a world where this criminal is the hero of many. It is becoming more and more fashionable and trendy to ridicule Jesus and the Christian people. Trends can be wrong. They can be very wrong. Crowds can yell, "Crucify Him."

The wise criminal spoke the truth to the foolish criminal. He said, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

Wise people recognize their own sins and failings. They do not try to cover it up or blame others.

The wise criminal swallowed his pride and turned to Jesus and said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." We don't know why this criminal made such a bold request. Possibly his heart was touched when he heard Jesus pray for His executioners, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Whatever the reason, these were some of the wisest words ever spoken. This criminal anticipated his personal demise and turned to his only hope.

He then heard some of the sweetest words ever spoken. In the depth of despair and hopelessness, he heard Jesus promise, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." For this criminal, who dared to turn to Jesus, death was turned to life.

The end of the Church Year allows wise people to anticipate the end of their lives and the end of all things. They refuse to ignore the reality of sin and death. The end of the Church Year allows wise people the opportunity to reevaluate their priorities and humbly turn to Jesus with this request, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus has come into His kingdom. Death and the grave could not contain Him. He was raised from the dead and restored to life on Easter morn. He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God to rule as King of all creation for the sake of the Church (Ephesians 1).

The foolish will continue to ridicule Him. They will continue to ignore the reality of eternity.

The wise will humbly turn to Him, confess their sins, and hear His words of forgiveness. They will apply their hearts unto wisdom and finally be saved.

"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** O Christ, our King, You have made peace for us by the blood of Your cross. You have pleaded with the Father for our pardon, and through You all things are reconciled to God. By Your Spirit, lead us to never-ending joy and thanksgiving that You have redeemed us by Your Passion from wrath and damnation.
- C** Amen.
- L** O Christ, our King, You have delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into Your kingdom. In You we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Guard Your people and Your ministers, and preserve Your Word among us. Rule over Your Church with the forgiveness of sins and work all things together for her good, until at last we rise with You.
- C** Amen.
- L** O Christ, our King, by Your atoning death we are spared as sons and estimated as treasured possessions of the Father. Bless all Christian homes, that as the children of Your kingdom we would grow in the fear of the Lord and esteem Your name, serve You faithfully, and walk in Your ways undismayed by the prosperity of the wicked, until all is revealed at the Last Day.
- C** Amen.
- L** Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from illness. 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.



1 From all that dwell be - low the skies Let the Cre - a - tor's
 2 E - ter - nal are Thy mer - cies, Lord; E - ter - nal truth at -
 3 All praise to God the Fa - ther be, All praise, e - ter - nal



praise a - rise; Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 tends Thy Word. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 Son, to Thee. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Let the Re - deem - er's name be sung Through ev - 'ry land by
 Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore Till suns shall rise and
 Whom with the Spir - it we a - dore For - ev - er and for -



ev - 'ry tongue. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 set no more. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 ev - er - more: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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The Church Year

The majority of Christians follow a worship calendar known as The Church Year. Unfortunately, it is foreign to many American Protestants who have forgotten or rejected their connection to the Church throughout history.

The Church Year follows a rhythm of focusing half of the year on the life of Christ and half a year on the life of the Church (or Christian growth). This discipline is helpful in keeping individual pastors or churches from becoming one-dimensional in their spiritual lives. It is also helpful for Christians throughout the world to express their unity through their weekly sharing of the same lessons from God's Word.

We are at a turning point of The Church Year today. The Church Year ends with our focus on the return of Christ at the end of the age. Today, all around the world Christians are rejoicing in the blessed anticipation of seeing their Savior return with all of His angels to bring a culmination to all of the promises of Holy Scripture.

Next Sunday we begin anew our annual celebration of Advent with its dual focus on both the first and second coming of Christ. We will again hear the cry of John the Baptist. We will join Isaiah in joyful anticipation. We will overhear Gabriel's grace-filled greeting to Mary as she learns that she will be the mother of our Savior and Lord.

About 50 years ago the series of lessons read on Sunday was reformed to include more Scripture than had previously been read in the churches. The one-year lectionary was replaced with a three-year cycle of lessons that reflect the Church Year more broadly from all four Gospels. Today we conclude Series C in this cycle which as you may have noticed draws most of the Gospel lessons from St. Luke. Next Sunday we begin Series A. The Gospel According to St. Matthew will provide most of our Gospel lessons for the coming Church Year.

A summary of the Church Year is found on page x in Lutheran Service Book. The lessons appointed for Series A are found on page xiv. Since Easter is the key day around which the Church Year pivots, the Epiphany Season is shortened or lengthened each year. The dates of Easter until the year 2050 are found on page xxiii.

While you are exploring the introductory pages of the Lutheran Service Book, turn to page xxiv and review the glossary of worship terminology. The Church has used most of the terms defined on those pages for over a thousand years. Sports fans and hobbyists, professionals, and specialists become familiar with the distinctive vocabulary for their chosen interests. Christians who seek to be more than just casual observers will also want to explore the richness of our historic vocabulary of worship and worship practices.

Pastor Quardokus

Service Notes:

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

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

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

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

The Last Sunday of the Church Year

November 21 – 26, 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

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

Introit Psalm 134; antiphon Psalm 33:8

- L** Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
- C** Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
who stand by night in the house of the Lord!
- L** Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord!
- C** May the Lord bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth!
- 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** Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

Verse Luke 23:43

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. 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.

On April 29, 1967, Aretha Franklin released what became her signature song, “Respect.” Very few vintage adults would not recognize this famous line from the song, “R-E-S-P-E-C-T Find out what it means to me.” Her recording reached number 1 on Bill Board’s Pop Singles Chart. In 2004, *Rolling Stone* listed it as number 5 in the magazine’s “500 Greatest Songs of All Time.”

Now, ironically, a generation or two later, it seems that the idea of respect has reached a new low in our culture. There was a time when most Americans respected our elected officials regardless of their personal party affiliation. But for the last two or more decades there seems to have been a competition to see who can be the most disrespectful of leaders from the opposite party.

Recently in the news, we have learned of activists who proudly show their lack of respect for others by desecrating valuable museum pieces to promote their causes. It is hard to advance the teaching of mutual respect and anti-bullying in our schools when it is seen as acceptable in every other facet of society.

I have even experienced it in our churches. I recently attended a pastor’s conference in which the speaker showed little respect for his audience by repeatedly using vulgar language in his presentation. And so it goes.

Yet in our current cavalier attitude regarding respect toward others, there is one boundary that we dare not cross. The antiphon from Psalm 33:8 declares, “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!” This is a stark warning to all those who would disrespect God!

Those who insult and disrespect God do so at their own peril. The great Pharaoh of Egypt could not survive God’s judgment (Exodus 1-14). Goliath was felled by a shepherd boy (1 Samuel 17). The prophets of Baal did not stand a chance in their competition with Elijah (1 Kings 18). These three examples show what happens when we show no respect for God.

Christian people do not need to “fear” God in the sense of being afraid of Him because of our sinfulness. We have been redeemed by Jesus and stand before God as forgiven sons and daughters. However, we must never lose our sense of awe of God and His glory. He is a mighty and majestic God.

The writer of Hebrews warns against trampling underfoot the Son of God and profaning the blood of the covenant. Those who outrage the Spirit of grace should know, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Rather than disrespecting God, let us lift up our hands to the holy place and bless the Lord! For Jesus, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

L Let us pray. O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Son our Savior. Grant us faith to trust in Him and the wisdom to respect You and Your word and stand in awe before Your throne through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse Luke 23:43

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. 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: Lord Jesus Christ, You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

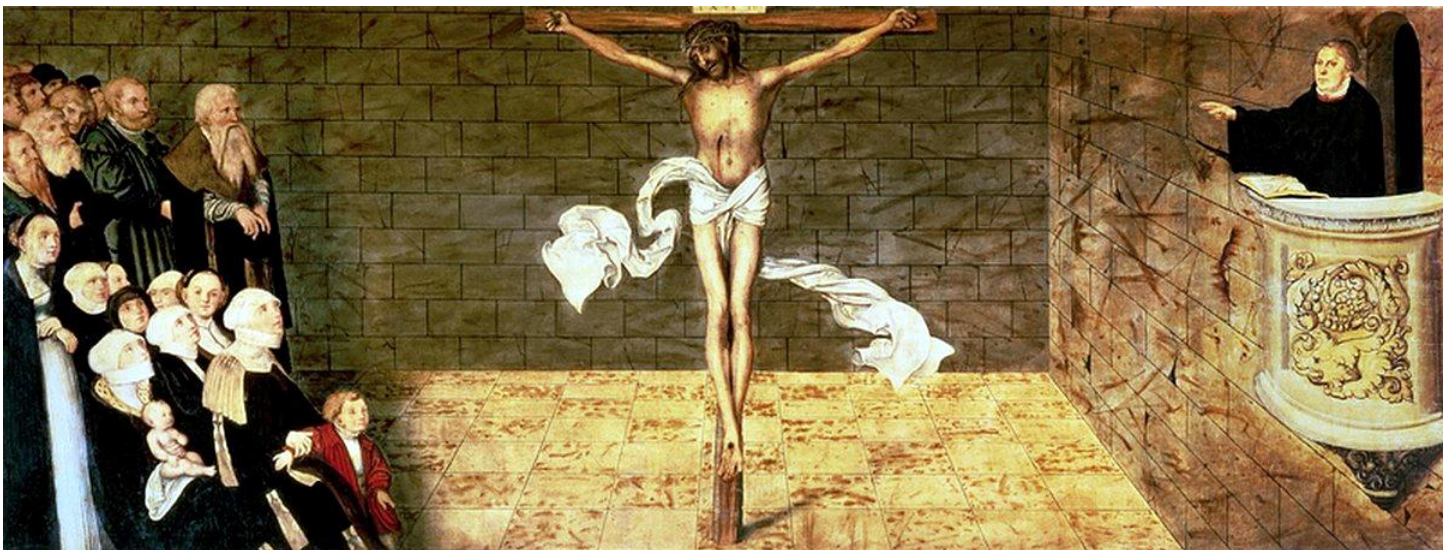
The city of Wittenberg hosts two important churches in the history of the Reformation. One is All Saints' Church also known as the Castle Church. It was on the door of this church that Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. Luther's grave is located in front of the pulpit.

The other church is St. Mary's also known as the City Church. Two important Reformation practices began in this church. Here the church service was conducted in German instead of Latin for the first time following the beginning of the Reformation. Also, it was in this congregation where the laity began receiving both the bread and wine during the distribution of the Lord's Supper which became the standard practice of Lutherans. This is the church where Martin Luther often preached.

There is an ongoing debate about the content of Christian preaching. Should it focus on practical matters and advice for living? Should it take on contemporary social issues? Is it an opportunity to promote civic pride and patriotism? The list goes on and there is support for every position.

But for Martin Luther, there was no debate. He was on the side of the Apostle Paul who said, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Without the crucified Christ every other aspect of life is pointless. Without Christ's sacrifice for sins and the gift of eternal life won for us on the cross, "All is vanity" as Ecclesiastes 2:1 tells us.

The Altarpiece of St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg graphically depicts Martin Luther preaching Christ crucified to the people. It was completed by Lucas Cranach the Elder and his son Lucas Cranach the Younger in 1547, the year after Luther's death.



Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father 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 Luke 23:43

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. Alleluia.

Psalm 46

- L** ¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
C ²**Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,**
L ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
C ⁴**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**
L ⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.
C ⁶**The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.**
L ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
C ⁸**Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.**
L ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.
C ¹⁰**“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”**
L ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;
C **the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

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. |

Psalm 46 directs our attention again to Martin Luther. His most famous hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” was inspired by this psalm.

Anyone who studies the Reformation will realize how difficult the times were. In 1521, following Luther’s appearance before the Diet of Worms, The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, issued the Edict of Worms. It banned Luther’s writings and declared him to be a heretic and an enemy of the state. It read:

For this reason, we forbid anyone from this time forward to dare, either by words or by deeds, to receive, defend, sustain, or favor the said Martin Luther. On the contrary, we want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic, as he deserves, to be brought personally before us, or to be securely guarded until those who have captured him inform us, whereupon we will order the appropriate manner of proceeding against the said Luther. Those who will help in his capture will be rewarded generously for their good work.

It is no wonder that Luther often turned to Psalm 46 for comfort. During their darkest times in the Reformation, Luther would turn to his friend Philip Melancthon and say, “Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm.”

God’s people have always turned to Psalm 46 when times were bleak. In many ways, we may feel that we are living in such times.

The end of the Church Year gives us the annual opportunity to contemplate difficult times and the end of

all things. Psalm 46 reminds us that no matter how difficult things become, God is always there for us. He is a very present help in trouble.

He has conquered the worst trouble of all. In Jesus and through His cross, He has overcome death and the grave for us! "Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea." Even the end of creation cannot separate us from God and His love for us in Christ (Romans 8:37-39).

Prayer: O Lord God, heavenly Father, thank You for being our Refuge and Strength. In difficult times of turmoil and despair, grant that we would be still and know that You are God. Let us never lose heart but always trust in the gift of eternal life that You have given to us in Jesus. Amen.

Thursday – Thanksgiving Day.

(For a longer Thanksgiving Day service with three readings and five hymns go to
<http://quardokus.com/homeworship/Thanksgiving-24November2022.pdf>)

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come Lutheran Service Book 892, Lutheran Worship 495, The Lutheran Hymnal 574



1 Come, ye thank-ful peo-ple, come; Raise the song of har-vest home.
2 All the world is God's own field, Fruit un-to His praise to yield;
3 For the Lord, our God, shall come And shall take His har-vest home,
4 E-ven so, Lord, quick-ly come To Thy fi-nal har-vest home;



All be safe-ly gath-ered in Ere the win-ter storms be-gin;
Wheat and tares to-geth-er sown, Un-to joy or sor-row grown.
From His field shall in that day All of-fens-es purge a-way,
Gath-er Thou Thy peo-ple in, Free from sor-row, free from sin,



God, our mak-er, doth pro-vide For our wants to be sup-plied.
First the blade and then the ear, Then the full corn shall ap-pear.
Give His an-gels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast,
There, for-ev-er pu-ri-fied, In Thy gar-ner to a-bide:



Come to God's own tem-ple, come; Raise the song of har-vest home.
Lord of har-vest, grant that we Whole-some grain and pure may be.
But the fruit-ful ears to store In His gar-ner ev-er-more.
Come with all Thine an-gels, come, Raise the glo-rious har-vest home.

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

C Amen

Matthew 28:19

P O Lord, open my lips,

C and my mouth shall declare Your praise.

Psalm 51:15

Psalm 95:1-7

L Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;

C let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

L Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

C let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

L For the Lord is a great God,

C and a great King above all gods.

L In his hand are the depths of the earth;

C the heights of the mountains are his also.

L The sea is his, for he made it,

C and his hands formed the dry land.

L Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

C let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

L For he is our God,

C and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

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.

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. Maybe it is for this reason that when I actively served as a pastor, I annually held a Thanksgiving Day service on Thanksgiving Day! After all, that's the purpose of the day.

However, as you know, few people see Thanksgiving as a day for giving thanks! For example, over the years, many have chosen to call it Turkey Day. It has become "a day for family" or "a day for sports." All of those are fine, as long as we never forget that it is primarily a day for giving thanks to God!

Some pastors downplay Thanksgiving because it is not part of the historic Church Year. However, Thanksgiving, as well as Christmas and Easter, are firmly rooted in our Christian heritage.

There was a time when all children learned in school that what we call "The First Thanksgiving" was observed by the Pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World in October 1621. It was a three-day feast attended by 53 Pilgrims and 90 Wampanoag.

But of course, this wasn't the real "First Thanksgiving." The Bible is filled with people who turned to God in thanksgiving for all of their blessings.

Many Christians are aware of Psalm 50:15, "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." But we should also remember the previous verse, "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High" (Psalm 50:14 KJV).

Some of our most sincere and heartfelt thanks come when we recognize that God has delivered us from trouble! That was the case for the Pilgrims. Almost half of the original pilgrims died during their first winter in the new world. Now, they recognized the goodness of God in the bounty of their harvest. As faithful Christians, they were compelled to offer thanks to God!

In the Gospel reading for Thanksgiving Day, we learn of ten lepers who were sentenced to a life of misery and distress because of their disease. They cried out to Jesus for mercy. In His love for them, Jesus healed them all from the unimaginable distress of leprosy.

All of them turned to Jesus for help. Only one gave thanks. Unfortunately, that seems to be about right.

God has abundantly blessed us, too. We are all compelled to cry out, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (KJV). Unfortunately, sometimes it seems that only one in ten do.

God has delivered us from a greater trouble than hunger or leprosy. He has delivered us from sin and death! Our hearts are so overwhelmed by His compassion that we not only thank Him one day a year but we thank Him every day.

On this Thanksgiving Day, it is also appropriate that we thank God for every blessing that He has granted to our nation. We are not the first generation to recognize the shortcomings of our country. But sometimes it seems as though we are becoming the first generation to forget the blessings of living in the “home of the brave and the land of the free.”

As a country, we would do well to read again George Washington’s proclamation of the first national Thanksgiving Day in 1789—the first year of our constitutional republic. It begins with these words, “It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor.”

(I have included His entire proclamation below.)

L Let us Pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, through whose kindness we have again received the fruits of the earth in their season, grant us ever to rejoice in Your mercy that neither prosperity nor adversity may drive us from Your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with You the Holy Spirit, for whose blessed peace we give thanks.

C Amen.

We Praise You, O God Lutheran Service Book 785, Lutheran Worship 494, The Lutheran Hymnal 568



1 We praise You, O God, our Re - deem - er, Cre - a - tor;
2 We wor - ship You, God of our fa - thers, we bless You;
3 With voic - es u - nit - ed our prais - es we of - fer



In grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
Through tri - al and tem - pest our guide You have been.
And glad - ly our songs of thanks - giv - ing we raise.



We lay it be - fore You, we kneel and a - dore You;
When per - ils o'er - take us, You will not for - sake us,
With You, Lord, be - side us, Your strong arm will guide us.



We bless Your ho - ly name, glad prais - es we sing.
And with Your help, O Lord, our strug - gles we win.
To You, our great Re - deem - er, for - ev - er be praise!

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Friday

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

Verse Luke 23:43

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. 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.

Colossians 1:13–20

¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

On this day after Thanksgiving, it would be good for us to include Paul's words to the Colossians recorded a few verses prior to our Epistle lesson.

Colossians 1:3-6

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

The Apostle Paul is thankful for the faith and love displayed by the Christians in Colossae. During my active days serving as a pastor, I learned to be thankful for the faithful people that God brought into each congregation where I served. It is too easy for pastors to become discouraged when we look at the empty pews. I soon realized that I was not preaching to the empty pews but to the ones that were occupied. On this day after Thanksgiving, it would be good if we all paused for a moment and gave thanks to God for the faithful Christian people in our lives.

In the first two verses of our Epistle lesson (Colossians 1:13–20), Paul wrote, “He has delivered us from

the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” It is easy to read the news and become dismayed by the abundance of evil in the world. These words from the Apostle Paul help us to refocus our thoughts. We are thankful that God has delivered us from being citizens of the domain of darkness and evil. Wickedness may surround us but it is not who we are.

We have been transferred into the kingdom of Jesus, God’s beloved Son. No matter how evil or wicked we were before, we now have redemption and forgiveness of sins. This gives us reason for Thanksgiving every day of our lives.

No one must stay in the domain of darkness. By God’s grace, the kingdom of heaven is open to all who turn from their wickedness and cling to Jesus by faith.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for delivering us from the domain of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of Your Beloved Son. Grant us thankful hearts for the redemption and forgiveness that we have in Him. Move us to thanksgiving for the fellow redeemed who live in faith and love through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Verse Luke 23:43

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Truly, I say to you, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Today you will be with me in Paradise. 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.

(Please download again for today’s meditation.)

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Spirit who enables us to live noble lives of faith. Grant us the desire and ability to lead god-pleasing lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

George Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation 1789

By the President of the United States of America, a Proclamation.

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor-- and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be-- That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks--for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation--for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war--for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed--for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted--for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

and also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions-- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually--to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed--to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord--To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and us--and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
Go: Washington

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