

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost November 19, 2023

As the Church Year draws to a close and the harvest is nearing its end, we cannot help but look back at the wonderful blessings that God has granted to us, His people. However, we must also look ahead to the day when this sinful world draws to a close. Awaiting Christ's return, let us be faithful and so hear the words of the Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Wherever we may fail in our faithfulness, let there be true repentance and forgiveness for Christ's sake.

O Worship the King

Lutheran Service Book 804, Lutheran Worship 458, The Lutheran Hymnal 17



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 143:2, 5–6, 10–11; antiphon Psalm 143:1

L Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

C Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

L I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.

C I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

L Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

C For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

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 prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

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 ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Zephaniah 1:7–16

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is near;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice
and consecrated his guests.

⁸And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—

"I will punish the officials and the king's sons
and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

⁹On that day I will punish

everyone who leaps over the threshold,
and those who fill their master's house
with violence and fraud.

¹⁰"On that day," declares the LORD,

"a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,
a wail from the Second Quarter,
a loud crash from the hills.

¹¹Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!

For all the traders are no more;
all who weigh out silver are cut off.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with
lamps, and I will punish the men
who are complacent,

those who say in their hearts,

'The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do ill.'

¹³Their goods shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them."

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.

¹⁵A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

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 Blessèd are those whose strength is in you,

C **in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

Psalm 90:1–12

L ¹Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

C ²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

L ³You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!”

C ⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**

L ⁵You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning:

C ⁶**in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.**

L ⁷For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed.

C ⁸**You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.**

L ⁹For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

C ¹⁰**The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.**

L ¹¹Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

C ¹²**So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day Matthew 25:29a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,

C **and he will have an abundance. Alleluia.**

Matthew 25:14–30

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 25th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁴[Jesus said:] “It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

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

The Day Is Surely Drawing Near

Lutheran Service Book 508, Lutheran Worship 462, The Lutheran Hymnal 611



1 The day is sure - ly draw - ing near When Je - sus, God's a - noint - ed,
2 The fi - nal trum - pet then shall sound And all the earth be shak - en,
3 The books are o - pened then to all, A rec - ord tru - ly tell - ing
4 Then woe to those who scorned the Lord And sought but car - nal plea - sures,



In all His pow - er shall ap - pear As judge whom God ap -
And all who rest be - neath the ground Shall from their sleep a -
What each has done, both great and small, When he on earth was
Who here de - spised His pre - cious Word And loved their earth - ly



point - ed. Then fright shall ban - ish i - dle mirth, And flames on
wak - en. But all who live will in that hour, By God's al -
dwell - ing, And ev - 'ry heart be clear - ly seen, And all be
trea - sures! With shame and trem - bling they will stand And at the



flames shall rav - age earth As Scrip - ture long has warned us.
might - y, bound - less pow'r, Be changed at His com - mand - ing.
known as they have been In thoughts and words and ac - tions.
judg - e's stern com - mand To Sa - tan be de - liv - ered.

5 My Savior paid the debt I owe
And for my sin was smitten;
Within the Book of Life I know
My name has now been written.
I will not doubt, for I am free,
And Satan cannot threaten me;
There is no condemnation!

6 May Christ our intercessor be
And through His blood and merit
Read from His book that we are free
With all who life inherit.
Then we shall see Him face to face,
With all His saints in that blest place
Which He has purchased for us.

7 O Jesus Christ, do not delay,
But hasten our salvation;
We often tremble on our way
In fear and tribulation.
O hear and grant our fervent plea:
Come, mighty judge, and set us free
From death and ev'ry evil.

Devotional thoughts:

The last three Sundays of the Church Year give us the opportunity to read the entire twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. Jesus teaches about the end times in this chapter as His earthly ministry is drawing to a close. The next chapter begins with the Plot to Kill Jesus.

Last week, we read the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Today, we hear the Parable of the Talents. Next week, we will learn of the Final Judgment and the separating of the sheep from the goats.

On one hand, the Parable of the Talents is an understandable description of the business world but on the other, it is perplexing to us who know that salvation comes by grace. This difficulty is resolved when we realize who Jesus is describing—the leaders of the people!

The chief priests and the elders of the people will soon plot to kill Jesus. They were entrusted with leadership in God's kingdom. They were expected to be faithful but they proved to be worthless. Jesus is teaching about the difference between faithfulness and worthlessness!

In this parable, the servants are not handling anything that they have earned or deserved. They are simply managing talents that are entrusted to their care. As Christians, we recognize that everything we have is given to us by God. We are merely stewards of His creation. Even our personal accomplishments are gifts from God. He gives us energy, intelligence, and skill to accomplish and achieve all that we do in life.

The Master only asks His servants to be faithful. Three servants are selected. They are entrusted with varying sums. The Master's estimation of each servant's faithfulness turns out to be accurate. The servant given five talents puts the Master's money to work and produces a 100% return on his investment. So also is the servant who is entrusted with two talents. However, the servant given one talent doesn't even try to be a good steward. He doesn't want anything to do with the Master's money. He hides it away and goes about his business.

When the Master returns, the first two servants receive high praise. The Master declares, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much." They each receive a reward when He says, "Enter into the joy of your master." Pause for a moment and appreciate that these servants were not promised a reward nor did they deserve a reward. They were only doing what was required of them. But the Master gives them a great reward as a gift.

However, the third servant is worthless. He makes no attempt at faithfulness. He is not trustworthy. He squanders his opportunity to be faithful and hides the money away. The Master did not need a servant to hide His money. He could have done that without any help at all. This servant doesn't even put the money in the bank to earn minimal interest.

The worthless and unfaithful servant represents the chief priests and elders, those entrusted with leadership in God's kingdom. They do nothing to promote the kingdom. They use their positions for personal aggrandizement while God's work is buried and hidden away. When confronted with slothfulness, there is no remorse or repentance.

Life in God's kingdom is not a license to indulge in selfish and sinful activities. That is the definition of worthlessness. Rather, it is a call to faithfulness. Indeed, we will often fail in our attempts at faithfulness. The old sinful self will emerge. But life in God's kingdom is one of constant repentance and renewal. It is a life lived under the cross. It is a life bathed in forgiveness.

God does not require you to produce a 100% return on investment. He does require faithfulness. Those who complete their earthly journey in faith will hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. ...Enter into the joy of your master." This is not because we have earned salvation. Salvation was purchased and won for us by the holy precious blood, innocent suffering, and death of Jesus on the cross. It is a gift of grace!

"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 4:6-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L Lord God, enter not into judgment with Your servants, for no one living is righteous before You. Have mercy on those who are haunted by guilt and shame, and faithfully convince them of Your grace, forgiveness, and mercy for them in Christ Jesus.

C Amen.

L Teach us to do Your will, for You are our God. Strengthen each of us to meditate on all You have done and proclaim Your Word in its truth and purity, that Your good Spirit may lead us on level ground, holy and righteous before You.

C Amen.

L Father in heaven, You have made us children of the light and of the day. Bless our homes, especially parents as they teach their children Your ways, that Your people may walk as those armored in faith, love, and salvation.

C Amen.

L Holy God, a nation that despises You will be as a sacrifice to others, for it has rejected You as its strength and shield. Grant repentance in our land, that our laws may be just, our transactions honest, and our love for others fervent.

C Amen.

L O God of peace, during this time of war in the ancient land of Israel and in Ukraine, we pray that You would grant a swift end to the conflict, that right and justice would prevail, and that You would grant Your mighty hand of protection to the innocent and helpless.

C Amen.

L Righteous God, You give leaders to every nation and people. Grant us good and wise public servants to defend the innocent and punish evil. Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police, and firefighters.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, Your Son came to heal the sick and forgive sinners. Hear our prayers for those who suffer in any way. Restore them according to Your gracious will, and strengthen their trust in Your faithfulness and love. Let Your blessings rest upon all medical personnel and first responders who come to our aid in time of need.

C Amen.

L God of grace, preserve us in faithfulness to You and Your holy word. Let us never fall into the temptation to consider You to be a hard and unmerciful master. Keep us mindful that You give us every good thing in abundance, most of all a place in Your eternal kingdom; for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

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

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

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

C Amen.

Take My Life and Let It Be

Lutheran Service Book 783, Lutheran Worship 404, The Lutheran Hymnal 400



1 Take my life and let it be Con-se - crat - ed, Lord, to Thee;
2 Take my hands and let them move At the im - pulse of Thy love;
3 Take my voice and let me sing Al-ways, on - ly for my King;
4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, Not a mite would I with - hold;



Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease-less praise.
Take my feet and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for Thee.
Take my lips and let them be Filled with mes - sag - es from Thee.
Take my in - tel - lect and use Ev - 'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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Service Notes:

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

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

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

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

The Week of

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 13 - 18, 2023

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.
- G** Amen.

Verse of the Day Matthew 25:29a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
- G** and he will have an abundance. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 143:2, 5–6, 10–11; antiphon Psalm 143:1

- L** Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!
- G** Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.
- L** I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.
- G** I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.
- L** Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!
- G** For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!
- 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 prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

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.

The Lutheran Study Bible begins its commentary on Psalm 143 with these words from Martin Luther, “Every psalm, all Scripture, calls to grace, extols grace, searches for Christ, and praises only God’s work, while rejecting all the works of man.... The life of a saint is more a taking from God than a giving; more a desiring than a having; more a becoming pious than a being pious.... Not on account of the work I do, but on account of the faith Thou givest me” (AE 14:196).

We can see this in our introit for today. David begins with a cry for mercy. He does not demand anything from God. He simply offers this plea. In verse 11, we learn the reason for David’s confidence in God’s deliverance. It is for the Lord’s own name’s sake!

Christian people are bold to come before God with our petitions for mercy. We do so because Jesus has issued us the invitation. It is for His Name’s sake that God answers our prayers. We trust in God’s faithfulness to His own promises.

L Let us pray. O Lord, hear our prayer. You know our unworthiness. Yet we ask because You have told us to pray and promised to answer. Grant to us forgiveness, life, and salvation, through 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 of the Day Matthew 25:29a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
C and he will have an abundance. 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 ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen

You may have heard the admonition, “Just have faith!” Yet faith for faith’s sake is empty. What is it we have faith in? We have faith in the promises of God!

Misplaced faith is dangerous. You may trust your friends but they may let you down. You may trust your government but it is fickle. You may trust your own ability but it is inadequate.

We trust God and His promises. He has promised to give us life and salvation in Christ Jesus. We trust this and every promise He has given to us.

Prayer: Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, 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 Matthew 25:29a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
C and he will have an abundance. 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. |

Psalm 90:1–12

- L** ¹Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
C ²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**
L ³You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!”
C ⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**
L ⁵You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning:
C ⁶**in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.**
L ⁷For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed.
C ⁸**You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.**
L ⁹For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
C ¹⁰**The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.**
L ¹¹Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?
C ¹²**So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

Psalm 90 is one suggested for use at funerals. It has much to say for those near death or experiencing the death of a loved one. All of life for a Christian is with God. He is our dwelling place here on earth and even more so for all eternity.

God is a God of eternity. Long before creation, He was God. He is God from everlasting to everlasting. A thousand years for God is no longer than a passing night! We may live 70 or 80 years but this is nothing compared to an eternal God. We should keep this in mind as we go through life. We should keep an eye on eternity.

When we are young it is easy to lose track of time. Nevertheless, we all must remember that our days are numbered. We should use them to the best effect. What is it? We should gain a heart of wisdom. We should repent of our sins and come to faith in Christ. On the cross, He has opened for us the door of paradise. There we will spend eternity with Him. Thanks be to God.

Prayer: Lord, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Grant that we may rightly number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom and finally be saved; 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 Matthew 25:29a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
C and he will have an abundance. 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.

Zephaniah 1:7–16

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD!
For the day of the LORD is near;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice
and consecrated his guests.
⁸And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—
"I will punish the officials and the king's sons
and all who array themselves in foreign attire."
⁹On that day I will punish
everyone who leaps over the threshold,
and those who fill their master's house
with violence and fraud.
¹⁰"On that day," declares the LORD,
"a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,
a wail from the Second Quarter,
a loud crash from the hills."
¹¹Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!
For all the traders are no more;
all who weigh out silver are cut off.
¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with
lamps,
and I will punish the men
who are complacent,

those who say in their hearts,
'The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do ill.'
¹³Their goods shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them."

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.
¹⁵A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

Our Old Testament lesson from Zephaniah is a sober reminder that God is not to be mocked or ignored. For those who ignore God and His demands, judgment is coming. It will not be pleasant. It will be a bitter day of wrath, distress, and anguish. It will be a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom. Jesus has saved us from that Day of Judgment. Reject Him at your peril.

I have known many who try to pretend that God doesn't exist or that He will not judge. They live life as they please without an eye on eternity. But for some, the reality of our finite existence here on earth becomes real as their life draws to a close.

Thankfully, it is never too late to repent and return to the Lord. Our annual reminder of Judgment Day is a reminder to face eternity with a sober mind. Now is the time to confess and receive forgiveness, life, and salvation won for us by Jesus on the cross.

Prayer: O Lord God, thank you for the gift of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Grant that I may be faithful to You until the day You call me out this present time of tribulation and trial, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day Matthew 25:29a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
C and he will have an abundance. 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 Thessalonians 5:1–11

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Children of the light should never be deceived by those who are saying, “There is peace and security.” We should not be lulled to sleep by such empty rhetoric. We are to keep awake and be sober lest we be caught unawares by the destruction that can fall upon us like a thief in the night.

Drunkenness and orgies are the products of darkness. We belong to the day. We live in faith and love. We live with the hope and assurance of salvation. God has not destined us for wrath.

Jesus died for us to bring us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Challenge yourself to find someone this week who needs encouragement in their faith and give them your support and prayers.

Prayer: Almighty, everlasting God, thank You for calling us out of darkness, grant that we may live as children of the light as we await the call to our eternal home, through 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 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 Blessèd are those whose strength is in you,
C in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Verse of the Day Matthew 25:29a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. For to everyone who has will more be given,
C and he will have an abundance. 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. |

All that we have comes from God! Without His help, there is nothing that we could do or produce. He grants seed to the sower. He makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall. He is the Lord of the harvest. May we always recognize His bountiful goodness with thankful hearts.

More than that, He has given to us His own Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life! In Christ, God has more for you than you can begin to imagine!

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for Your gift of grace. Grant that we may look to You with gratitude, knowing that You have promised to give us more than we could ever imagine, though Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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